

THE ADMINISTRATION OF
GOVERNOR HENRY TOOLE CLARK
1861-1862

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ABSTRACT

Garry Carnell Mercer. THE ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNOR HENRY TOOLE CLARK, 1861-1862. (Under the direction of John C. Ellen) Department of History, December, 1965.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the administration of North Carolina Governor Henry Toole Clark. Clark served as the chief executive of the Tar Heel state from July, 1861, to September, 1862. Being governor during the first year of the Civil War makes Clark an important North Carolinian. Since Clark's role in North Carolina history has been long neglected, an attempt will be made to shed some light on this aspect of the state's history.

In 1850, Clark entered politics and won a seat in the state senate representing Edgecombe County. Using seniority and family influence, Clark was able in 1858, to acquire the speakership of the senate. Upon the death of Governor John W. Ellis in July, 1861, Speaker Henry Clark in accordance with the North Carolina constitution assumed the governorship. Mobilization of the state's energy and industries was the governor's chief job. While serving as governor, Clark faced many and varied problems such as equipping troops, organizing military units, establishing military prisons, providing military protection for the homefront, and unifying the people of North Carolina. Clark achieved a certain amount of success in all of these areas.

As a political party leader Governor Henry Clark was a failure. He tried to remain aloof from all political parties and never accepted the role of leader in any political party. North Carolina sorely needed

a man respected and trusted by all factions and parties in 1861. Henry Toole Clark was such a man. By 1862, the competing political parties in the state were ready for a change. Each party needed a forceful leader and Clark did not measure up to this qualification.

Governor Clark was not a candidate for re-election in September, 1862. After turning over the state government to his successor Zebulon B. Vance, Clark retired from politics and returned to Tarboro. Until the end of the war he remained at Hilma, his plantation, spending a great deal of his time corresponding with friends.

In the final analysis, after an examination of existing correspondence and official documents, it must be concluded that Henry Clark was a mediocre governor. While only an average governor never rising above the status of state politician, Clark managed to accomplish several things during his term with the help of his aides, by gaining the respect of the people, and by his own determination and efforts. Hard work and dependability were the main assets of Henry Clark. As a political leader Clark failed; however, as a man of character he won the respect of North Carolinians.

PREFACE

North Carolina during the Civil War had a total of three governors. The first, John W. Ellis, died soon after the Act of Secession was passed and the state withdrew from the Union. The second, Henry Toole Clark, served as governor for one year before retiring from politics. The third, Zebulon B. Vance, went on to become known as the War Governor of North Carolina. Various authors have examined and reexamined the role of Vance in the state's war effort, but no such study has been conducted with regard to Henry Clark.

This study was undertaken to clarify this neglected phase of the War Between the States. While some biographical material has been included, this is not intended to be a biographical study, but rather an evaluation of Clark's administration as governor. The correspondence of Clark both private and public, newspapers of the period, and public documents provided the criteria for this evaluation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Governor Henry T. Clark served a comparatively short term as the chief executive of North Carolina. While his term covered only one year, the importance of this period in our state's history cannot be overlooked. Henry Clark led the state during the first year of secession. This thesis will try to give a clear picture of Clark's attempts to ready the state for the War Between the States. This will be done by tracing the early career of Clark and his actions as chief executive.

The institution of slavery was firmly established in the coastal areas of North Carolina prior to the War Between the States. There were, of course, nonslaveholders present in this area, but the planters were the dominant group. The coastal area, prior to 1860, was fast becoming a minority section. The piedmont and mountain areas of North Carolina were developing. These two areas were progressing in the social and economic fields as well as in numbers. As late as 1860, there were forty counties in the east, thirty-one in the piedmont, and fifteen in the Appalachian area.¹ As the coastal area was an agrarian section, it fostered the traditional opposition to increased governmental power. Added to this traditional opposition was the idea that the planter's way of life was being attacked. In eastern North Carolina, as in the Deep South, an attack on slavery was an attack on the white civilization. The anti-slavery campaigns of the 1850's, therefore, had a more ominous appearance in eastern North Carolina.

¹ Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina (1939), p. 10.

Socially most North Carolinians were farmers and craftsmen. In contrast to the political alignment found in the states of the Deep South, the Whigs in North Carolina were most popular where slavery was not predominate. These areas included western Carolina, a section along the coast of North Carolina, and certain areas of the piedmont. Whig popularity resulted from their program which promised state aid for needed improvements in these areas. The Democrats were strongest in those counties where slavery, cotton, and tobacco dominated the economy. The middle section of eastern Carolina was dominant in this type of economy.

In the 1850's William Woods Holden emerged as the leader of the Democratic party in North Carolina. Holden made the party an active one, which championed the cause of the poor laboring class. As long as the Whigs were a threat and elections needed to be won, the more conservative Democrats sat back and allowed Holden to run the party, but they did not like it. Holden got the General Assembly of North Carolina to invest in and foster several pieces of progressive legislation. The conservative eastern Democrats felt ill at ease with Holden and his friends. By the mid-1850's the Whig party was almost dead in the state, so the conservatives decided to resume control of the Democratic party. Holden had alienated the conservatives by appealing to the poor whites. The conservatives wanted to make the Democratic party the party of states rights, property rights, slavery, and the supporter of the upper classes.

During 1857, the friends of Holden announced that they would support him in the 1858 Democratic state convention for the gubernatorial nomination. The eastern conservatives now had plenty of time to find an opponent. The former Whigs joined the eastern Democrats in large numbers due to their dislike for Holden. The forces opposing Holden lined up behind John W. Ellis.

The old Whig party was so divided and weak that it offered no candidate in 1858. John W. Ellis won the nomination and governorship.

The election results of 1858 returned the eastern conservatives to positions of power. The two top officials of the state government were members of this group, John Ellis as governor and Henry Toole Clark as speaker of the senate. This placed the control of the Democratic party in the hands of the planter class.

While the conservative forces were recapturing control of the Democratic party of North Carolina, new and eventful things were occurring in other sections of the country. These events would have a great effect on the people and leaders of North Carolina. The major event which brought the attention of North Carolinians to the full realization of the growing controversy between the North and South took place in 1859. In that year, John Brown and a small group of abolitionists raided Harper's Ferry, Virginia. The news of the raid spread across the nation. Northern and southern newspapers could write of little else. The North Carolina press carried the story of John Brown throughout his trial and death by hanging.

At first, the people of North Carolina regarded this insurrection as "the work of a wretched lunatic and fanatic; and a handful of desperadoes"² who would be condemned by the northern press and public as well as by their southern counterparts. This was the case, but only for a short period of time. As some of the more fiery abolitionist papers of the North began to make a martyr out of John Brown, the extremists of the South defended the southern viewpoint. This widening gap between southerners and abolitionists was quite evident in North Carolina as early as 1859. An editorial in The

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The Raleigh Register, October 26, 1859; Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina, p. 148.

Wilmington Journal on October 28, 1859, stated that abolitionists in the North were not satisfied with stealing and robbing the South of its rights, but now had resorted to "actual violence on our own soil."³ Editorials such as this carried in the state press caused the people to initiate demands for more respect of southern states and promises that they would not be subjugated by the North.

The northern press now came forth with praise for Brown and his efforts to free the slaves. This effort on the part of the northern press only served to infuriate many southerners. The mood and views of the planters were expressed in an editorial appearing in The Raleigh Register, which stated that the sole aim of the abolitionists was by any means to "deprive the South of its slave property."⁴ The newspapers seemed to indicate that now a true struggle had begun not only to maintain the rights of the state, but also to protect private property rights.

The idea of secession, long thought of and discussed by many, now came to the forefront. The people of the state and the leading newspapers began to delve into the various aspects of secession. Many southerners planned to use this extreme measure as a threat to the North to force a policy of hands off toward the South. The Wilmington Journal, located in strong slave territory, in December of 1859 began to survey the problem. The paper said in part that all thinking men saw now the probability that secession could not be avoided. The thought of secession the paper stated was painful, but a reality. The people, it stated, had looked at the alternatives and found

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The Wilmington Journal, October 28, 1859.

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The Raleigh Register, November 2, 1859.

that secession was the only way.⁵

The editorial comments in the leading newspapers were not the only signs of the growing discontent and dissatisfaction in the South. Alarm was slowly spreading across the state of North Carolina and the rest of the southern states. This evidence could be seen in the attention now being given to military affairs. Governor John Ellis applied twice to the United States War Department for arms "to put into the hands of the militia (in order to quiet) ... the sense of insecurity prevailing among the people."⁶ These arms were never supplied by the Federal government. The primary purpose of Ellis's asking for arms, seems to have been a desire to lessen the cries of extremists in the state. Ellis was later to agree with this group in speeches and actions, so it is possible that he was trying to arm the state even at this date.

County meetings were held throughout the state to prepare the counties, militarily and in order to pass resolutions regarding the political situation. These meetings were very popular and drew large crowds of interested people. The meeting held in Wilson County was typical of many other. At the Wilson County meeting, resolutions were passed stating that an efficient military organization was essential and necessary to the South. This resolution went on the point out the hatred of the North for the South and accused the North of taking part in aggression, insult, and spoliation.⁷

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The Wilmington Journal, December 8, 1859.

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North Carolina Standard (Raleigh), January 4, 1860; John Ellis to John Floyd, December 10, 1859, The Governor Papers of John Ellis, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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The Tarboro Daily Southerner, December 10, 1859.

This was the general climate throughout the state when the elections of 1860 occurred. Talk of the possibility of secession and military preparations in certain areas was not uncommon.

The Whig party of North Carolina called its convention to meet in Raleigh on February 22, 1860. The party platform adopted at this meeting advocated ad valorem taxation of all property, demanded a convention of the people to make this and other necessary changes in the constitution, and proclaimed the devotion of the party to the Union and demanded its preservation. The Whigs nominated John Pool for governor.

The Democrats held their convention in Raleigh on March 8, 1860. The platform of the Democrats was southern by nature and contained a threat of secession. The platform straddled the fence on the issue of ad valorem taxation and instead called for equality of taxation under the limits of the constitution. The party renominated John W. Ellis for governor.

The Whigs pointed out in their campaign that only North Carolina among the southern states did not tax slaves. Governor Ellis claimed that if the Whigs won the election they would tax everything including the pots and pans. Since one of the main issues was taxation of slaves, the Whigs had the advantage, because the election was between slaveholders and nonslaveholders. The final victory went to the Democrats. The election was very close and the victory for the Democrats could be attributed to the interest in the presidential campaign, which overshadowed state and local affairs.

The presidential election of 1860 created the spark that eventually was to set off the War Between the States. The Republican party and its candidate, Abraham Lincoln, won the election because the Democrats split their votes among Douglas, Bell, and Breckinridge. The election of Lincoln

was the one thing that the South feared and the press in this section said that the Republican victory would either cause disruption in government or destroy the rights of the Southern states.⁸ The Newbern Progress, which supported Douglas in the election, proposed submission to Republican rule without a struggle. The paper suggested that a conference of the Southern states be held and that the North be asked for assurances it would respect the rights of the South. If the North refused then it proposed that the slave states withdraw from the Union.⁹

Other states in the South did not wait for a conference. South Carolina seceded from the Union and was followed by other Deep South states. Many papers in the state now praised South Carolina as the "Champion of Southern Rights."¹⁰ While the news media supported South Carolina, the people of North Carolina did not advocate secession. A majority of the people wanted to remain in the Federal Union. This majority was led by William Holden who held the belief that the state had a constitutional right to secede if it chose to do so. Secession at this time, however, the majority felt was inexpedient and unwise. North Carolina would wait and see the developments. This view was fostered by moderate Whigs and most Democrats in the state.

A minority group of secessionists worked in North Carolina to get the state to join the other southern states that had already seceded. Most

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The Wilmington Journal, November 15, 1860.

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The Newbern Progress, November 26, 1860.

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The State Journal (Raleigh), December 26, 1860. This paper was organized on November 28, 1860, with John Spelman, state printer, as its editor. The paper was the leading radical newspaper.

of the responsible leaders of the Democratic party such as speaker of the senate Henry Clark did not support secession at this time. They felt that it would be necessary, but wanted to hold off as long as possible. The most notable exceptions were Governor Ellis, Senator Thomas Clingman, and Weldon Edwards who were "leaning strongly toward secession."¹¹ Governor Ellis was corresponding with the radicals in South Carolina, expressing agreement with secession and promising that North Carolina would soon join her sister states in leaving the Union.¹²

The North Carolina General Assembly which convened in 1861 passed the Convention Act. This act provided for an election of delegates from all North Carolina counties to meet in Raleigh and discuss national affairs. This act provided that the final decision to call this convention would rest with the voters. The people of the state rejected the idea of a convention by a vote of 47,323 to 46,672. Those favoring secession helped destroy their cause, at this time, by allowing the idea to become widespread that the real purpose of this convention was to carry the state out of the Union.

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Governor John Ellis to Governor Gist, October 18, 1860, The Governor Papers of John Ellis, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; Sitterson, Secession Movement in North Carolina, p. 180.

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Robert N. Gourdin to John Ellis, December 12, 1860, The Governor Papers of John Ellis, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; Sitterson, Secession Movement in North Carolina, p. 190. Mr. Gourdin offered to furnish 10,000 leaflets to Governor Ellis for distribution. The pamphlets were entitled, "State Sovereignty and the Doctrine of Coercion" and "The Right to Secede." No evidence has been found that these were actually sent to Ellis, but it is known that Ellis supplied a list of names to whom secession literature could be sent in North Carolina.

The secessionist leaders, led by Governor Ellis, continued to agitate for their cause throughout the state. Other responsible leaders and institutions called for calm in these troubled times. The Greensboro Times asked the people of the state not to put their trust in the secession leaders. The paper stated that these leaders were working to deceive the people by playing upon an imagined evil that if successful would lead to a horrible reality. The paper stated further that to "follow them, and soon you will reach anarchy under a military despotism."¹³

The newspapers of the state were not united and other papers such as the Salisbury Banner and The Wilmington Journal warned the people of the state what abolition of the slaves as fostered by the Republicans would mean. These papers stated it would mean rapine, depredations and murder of the whites and that at best the Negroes would lower the white man in the South to the level of the Negro.¹⁴

While North Carolina was in deadlock over the secession question the first shots were fired on Fort Sumter. Now the people of North Carolina were faced with an overt act and the choice could be postponed no longer. President Lincoln immediately called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. The state of North Carolina was asked to furnish two regiments. The question for the state now was whether to fight for the North or the South. Governor Ellis replied that he regarded such a request as a violation of the United States Constitution and that the Federal authorities

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The Greensboro Times, January 19, 1861.

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The Salisbury Banner, February 19, 1861; The Wilmington Journal, February 21, 1861.

could "get no troops from North Carolina."¹⁵ North Carolina now had made a definite stand - - with the seceded Southern states. The Greensboro Times, who earlier had called for calm and thought, wrote; "We loved the Union, but we love honor more."¹⁶

The General Assembly in Raleigh called a convention to meet on May 20, 1861, in Raleigh. When the convention was convened, 117 delegates answered to their names. Three factions or parties were present at the convention; first, the original secessionists who had worked for this moment since 1859; second, a group who had been Union men, but now temporarily acted with the secessionists, and third, the old Union men.

Two men were nominated for the office of president of the convention. William A. Graham was nominated by the factions which doubted or even failed to recognize the constitutionality of secession. The original secessionists nominated Weldon N. Edwards. Edwards was elected president of the convention by a vote of sixty-five to forty-eight.¹⁷ This vote showed the Union strength in the state. The convention under the leadership of Edwards passed the Craige Ordinance which stated that North Carolina had seceded from the Union and would join the Confederate States of America.

Governor Ellis, in the early months of 1861 was an ailing man, which left the state without effective leadership. In March, 1861, the Raleigh Register in a report from New Bern stated that it believed the governor had rapid consumption and was sinking very fast.¹⁸ Governor Ellis died

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John Ellis to Secretary of War Cameron, April 15, 1861, The Governor Papers of John Ellis, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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The Greensboro Times, April 20, 1861.

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J. G. De Roulhac Hamilton, History of North Carolina Since 1860 (1919), p. 3.

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The Raleigh Register, March 27, 1861.

in office on July 7, 1861, and according to the state constitution, the office of governor would be filled by the speaker of the senate, Henry Clark.

This period was a critical one for the state and would require effective leadership on the state level. The problems and tasks of leaving one Union and going to another would be varied and difficult. The chief executive would have to provide this leadership. Henry Toole Clark, at fifty-three, found himself entrusted with this high office and a chance to exert his leadership upon the state. If the state was to make this transition smoothly or not would depend to a large degree on the chief executive. What then was the background of the new governor? Did he possess those characteristics and qualifications needed to lead a state in time of such great peril? This we find answered in a search of first, the political background of Henry Clark and second, in his administration as governor.

CHAPTER II

EARLY POLITICAL CAREER

Henry Toole Clark was born in Tarboro, North Carolina, on February 7, 1808.¹ Little information is ascertainable about the early events in Clark's life prior to 1850. The Clark family belonged to the eastern North Carolina planter aristocracy. Young Clark received the usual training of the planter class. He attended a school in Tarboro taught by George Phillips and later was enrolled at the Louisburg academy. In 1822, at the age of fourteen, Clark entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was graduated in 1826 with an A. B. degree.²

Clark became interested in law while in Chapel Hill. After graduation from the university he moved to Raleigh and read law under the supervision of his kinsman, William Haywood, Jr.³ The Haywood family was politically prominent in the state having senators and the first mayor of Raleigh in its background. Clark was influenced by the political views of Haywood and became an ardent supporter of Andrew Jackson and Jacksonian policies during these early years in his life.

Henry Clark was admitted to the bar, but never pursued the practice of law as a vocation. Clark returned to Tarboro in order to supervise the

¹ Beth G. Crabtree, North Carolina Governors 1585-1958, Brief Sketches (1958), p. 95.

² Among Clark's classmates were Daniel M. Barringer, later Minister to Spain and Samuel Johnson, rector of St. Paul's church at Edenton.

³ William Haywood, Jr. was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1819, studied law, served in the House of Commons from 1831 until 1836, served as Speaker of that body, and in 1842 became United States Senator from North Carolina. John Hill Wheeler, Historical Sketches of North Carolina From 1585-1851 Compiled From Original Records, Official Documents, and Traditional Statements With Biographical Sketches of Her Distinguished Statesmen, Jurists, Lawyers, Soldiers, Divines, etc. (1964), p. 418.

family holdings, which he had inherited from his father, James West Clark.⁴ These properties included plantations, town lots, and stores. A vast amount of time and energy was required in looking after such varied interests. Being a hard worker, however, did not prevent Clark from devoting some time to social activities.

The first venture of Henry T. Clark into the political field was made in 1850. In that year, Clark was elected to serve the county of Edgecombe in the state senate. Clark was a member of the Democratic party and served in the senate until 1861. During these eleven years Clark won the respect of his senate colleagues although he was a mediocre senator. The positions and the committees to which he was appointed were not the most important ones, but Clark worked, diligently, and gave endless energy to each job.⁵ Senator Clark lacked the political ability necessary to become a distinguished senator. He was a hard worker and follower but not a great leader. Given a task, Clark put forth the effort to try and solve it to the best of his ability.

Being a member of the wealthy planter class, Clark usually tried to maintain the status quo. When bills dealing with the construction and maintenance of public roads came before the senate, Clark felt such

⁴ The Clark family owned land in the eastern counties of Bertie, Franklin, and Edgecombe as well as in the state of Georgia. Land also was owned by the Clarks in Dyer County, Tennessee and in Sumter County, Alabama. Wills of the Clark Family, Henry Toole Clark Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁵ The committee appointments which Clark held were the following: Committee on Negro Slavery 1850, Committee on Rules of Order for the Senate and Committee on Corporations in 1852, Committee on Education and Literary Fund in 1854, 1856, Speaker of the Senate 1858-1861. The Senate Journal (1850, 1851, 1854, 1855, 1856).

expenditures were unnecessary and opposed them.⁶ In the 1856 session of the legislature it was proposed that certain lands located in Watauga County belonging to the Literary Fund be turned over to the Watauga Land Company to be used in road construction. Henry Clark opposed this bill on the grounds that the land belonged to the Literary Fund. He felt he would be neglecting his duty if he failed to oppose the disposition of land not intended for this purpose. Stating that the amount of land was small, Clark went on to point out the "bad precedent" it would set.⁷ This issue of state land pointed out again the care Clark gave to the spending of state revenues.

Clark did not support internal improvements such as road construction because he felt it was too expensive and often unnecessary. However, Clark was willing to spend state funds in order to aid the handicapped or underprivileged. Senator Clark introduced resolutions advocating passage of legislation to aid the deaf, dumb, and lunatic asylums in the state. Although conservative about the spending of state money for many items, Clark felt these certain areas deserved improvement even at the state's expense.

Having no effective political opposition in his home county, Democrat Clark was re-elected in 1858. As the session convened, Clark was elected Speaker of the Senate by a vote of twenty-eight to fourteen. Realizing the task before him and his own limitations Clark said in his acceptance speech:

⁶ The Senate Journal (1850-1851), p. 23.

⁷ North Carolina Standard, December 15, 1856.

The flattering vote which has just elevated me to this high and honorable position, I must regard as an evidence of your partiality, and not my merit; and to that partiality must I appeal to aid me in the discharge of its responsible duties. I make this appeal with the mere confidence from my former experience in this Hall ... We live in times of great political embarrassment, when not only our rights but the very principles of our government are imperilled. . . .⁸

The state senate under the speakership of Clark rapidly considered important issues of the state and local scene and turned its attention to national politics. The times were indeed perilous as Clark had stated. Talk of secession or the possibility of it was now in the open. Matters were fast coming to a point where some action had to be taken.

Throughout 1859 and well into 1860, North Carolina was the scene of continuing struggles between the factions favoring secession and those opposed to it. Clark as early as 1850, had felt that if the states' rights were infringed upon by the United States Government, then the states had the right to leave the Union. This does not mean to imply that as early as 1850 that Clark was advocating secession. Clark merely believed that the right existed. By the late 1850's, Clark was beginning to see that a separation would be necessary. He hoped for a peaceful separation, but did not rule out the possibility of the use of force against separationists.

In the 1860 election, Henry Clark was returned to the state senate and was re-elected as speaker of that body. The race for governor was won by John W. Ellis, a Democrat and secessionist. The state senate met in late 1860 and continued the struggle to maintain calm in the face of the growing secession activity.

A rapid series of events carried North Carolina out of the Union in May, 1861. With the secession of South Carolina and the other Southern

states, President Abraham Lincoln called for North Carolina troops and Governor Ellis refused. Henry Clark felt secession was now unavoidable because North Carolina would not fight against her sister states in the South. The people, naturally, looked to Governor Ellis for leadership, but there were extenuating circumstances even here, because Governor Ellis died in July, 1861, and Henry T. Clark assumed the office of governor.

The North Carolina Standard, Raleigh's leading Democratic paper, reported after the death of Governor Ellis and the succession of Clark to the office of governor that Clark possessed the necessary qualifications of experience and character and that he warranted "respect and confidence."⁹ The statements made in this and other newspapers were typical of those made by leading Democrats at this time. It must be remembered, however, that these endorsements were made during the transition period from one administration to another and such statements are usually favorable.

No person ever assumed the governorship at a more critical time. The North Carolina Standard, stated:

The duties of the office are, at this juncture especially delicate and highly responsible, demanding a wise, cool head, large experience and great purity of character.¹⁰

The paper went on to state that Clark possessed all of these attributes.

The qualifications which Clark possessed were many. The Clark family's social, economic, and political background were conducive to the governorship. Clark was descended from a prominent family which had furnished the

⁹ North Carolina Standard, July 24, 1861.

¹⁰ North Carolina Standard, July 17, 1861.

state and nation with many public servants.¹¹ Family wealth and social position led to proper education. Wealth and social position also opened many doors for Clark. Clark possessed some necessary political experience. His eleven year tenure in the senate proved to some degree that Clark could exert administrative and executive skills. While Clark, a mediocre senator, was willing to work and accept responsibility, he would not assume leadership. The meager amount of success that Clark enjoyed in the senate was a result of his family connections and seniority. Senator Clark was able to attain seniority primarily because he faced no opposition in Edgecombe County.

A man of deep moral convictions, Clark was looked upon as a man of unblemished character by his colleagues in the North Carolina Senate. Jonathan Worth, a later governor of North Carolina, stated that Clark was the "Noblest work of God, an honest man."¹² Like most men, Henry Clark possessed some attributes that were not to his advantage. By his enemies in the senate, Clark was described as unyielding, stubborn, and loyal to his class. In fact, Clark was so loyal to the planter class and so devoted to its ideals that during his administration he was accused of "partyism" and "favoritism" in appointing officials.¹³ This particular charge was

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A good example of Clark's family prominence was the fact that his father, James West Clark, was a graduate of Princeton University and held the offices of Presidential Elector, state representative from two counties, member of the fourteenth United States Congress, and was Chief Clerk in the Navy Department under Secretary of the Navy John Branch. Unpublished Biographical Sketch, Joseph Blount Chesire Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

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Application for Pardon, Henry Toole Clark, September 21, 1866, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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North Carolina Standard, June 21, 1862.

penned editorially by William W. Holden. The editorial, Holden stated, was in response to a number of letters received by the Standard. Holden stated that Clark seemed to appoint only those who had favored secession.

Governor Clark faced a grave responsibility for he not only had to unify the people of North Carolina, but also wage a war. The question of how well Clark would serve the state would have to be proved by Clark himself. Henry Clark had certain worthwhile qualifications, but he lacked the drive of leadership as proved by his senatorial career. This was to play a major role in his gubernatorial career.

CHAPTER III

MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The major task facing the state of North Carolina in the summer of 1861 was the problem of raising and equipping troops to fight the northern armies. This task was one of enormous proportions and Governor Clark endeavored energetically to solve it. The state of North Carolina was among the first states to organize the regiments for the front lines in Virginia, even though other southern states had seceded earlier.

North Carolina, according to the 1860 census, had a population of 992,622 and about one third of this number were Negroes. Out of less than 700,000 white population, the state supplied and sent more than 125,000 troops to the battlefields of the Confederacy. One month after assuming office Governor Clark received a report stating that twenty-six regiments were formed with several others on the way.¹ Governor Clark, of course, could not take complete credit for organizing all of these troops, because fifteen regiments were formed under Governor John Ellis, who preceded him in office.

This large contribution did not take into account the Home Guards, who remained in the state preserving law and order, guarding important installations, and were designated as reserves in case of invasion. The state made many contributions to the confederate cause, but the manpower it supplied was the most important. One out of every four confederate soldiers killed was from the state of North Carolina. This could be

¹ Report of Adjutant General Gordan to Henry Clark, August 8, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; Walter Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions From North Carolina In the Great War 1861-1865 (1901), p. 64. Hereinafter cited as Clark, Histories of Regiments.

attributed to the fact that more soldiers came from North Carolina and were involved in most of the major battles of the war.

This effort of raising troops in North Carolina began during the administration of Governor John Ellis. Governor Ellis organized fifteen regiments as authorized by the Secession Convention. Fifty regiments of North Carolina troops were organized during Governor Clark's term.² These regiments of about 1600 men each made up the bulk of North Carolina's contribution to the Confederate war effort. Organizing these troops required only one year, 1861-1862. Thus the job of appointing officers, obtaining recruits, equipping troops, and transporting the troops was entrusted to Governor Clark.

The raising of troops was a momentous effort and perhaps the major accomplishment of Clark's administration. Governor Clark was untiring in his efforts to attract recruits so that North Carolina would be able to fill its quota of troops. Clark now began to use every legal gubernatorial device to prepare the state of North Carolina for the war. In early October, 1861, while regiments were still forming, the Governor issued the following proclamation, which said in part:

I, Henry T. Clark, Governor Ex Officio of our said state, do hereby ratify and require all male citizens of this state, to return to North Carolina where their allegiance is justly due, within thirty days from the date hereof: and I do hereby declare as an alien enemy subject to all the various penalties and forfeitures, which are or may be incurred by an alien enemy, every person failing to obey the requirements of this proclamation: except he be a soldier in the army of the Confederate States, or some one of them: or in prison, or detained by force.³

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Clark, Histories of Regiments, p. 18.

3

Executive Proclamation of Henry T. Clark, October 1, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

By use of this proclamation, which the legislature approved, Governor Clark hoped not only to notify North Carolinians of their loyalty to their home state, but prepared to seize the property of people who owned North Carolina property but remained in the North. This property would be sold in order to raise funds for the confederate cause. According to available records, very few returned to North Carolina as a result of this proclamation and very little property was seized except in rare cases where the owner was a northerner.

In organizing fifty regiments of North Carolina troops the Clark administration relied upon volunteers for the most part. However, as the war continued unabated the number of volunteers in many areas began to dwindle and to combat this the Confederate Congress at Richmond began to consider a military draft. The northern armies continued to grow in number; therefore, President Jefferson Davis proposed in a message to the Confederate Congress in March, 1862, a "system of conscription, which was enacted into law by congress on April 16, 1862."⁴ The delegation from North Carolina split with a majority voting for the conscription law. Both senators of the state and four representatives voted yes, while only two representatives voted no.⁵

⁴ James M. Matthews (ed.), The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America (1864), 29-32.

⁵ Journal of the Confederate Congress (1904), p. 228. Those congressmen voting "yes" included Owen R. Kenon of Duplin, Thomas D. McDowell of Bladen, J. R. McLeon, and William Lander. Congressmen B. S. Gaither of Burke, A. T. Davidson of Macon voted "no". R. R. Bridgers of Edgecombe, Thomas S. Ashe of Anson, and William H. Smith of Hartford did not vote. Senators were George Davis and W. W. Avery.

The reaction to this new conscription law divided North Carolinians. In a letter dated April 24, 1862, Governor Clark writing to Secretary of War Randolph stated that he desired to carry out the conscription act "fairly and to the fullest extent of the wants of the country."⁶ This does not mean to imply that Clark was happy with the law, but he recognized the need for a law of this type and felt it was his official duty to enforce it to the best of his ability. Governor Clark in corresponding with one officer stated: "I regret the necessity for any draft, but the necessity of the country now, can respect neither individuals nor institutions."⁷

The Clark administration met opposition from some quarters of the state. One state leader, William W. Holden, opposed the law because he said: "it was an act of bad faith and because it encroached on the rights of the state."⁸ The people in Randolph, Guilford, and Davidson counties actively resisted the military requirements of the new draft law. In the summer of 1861, the Trinity Guard marched into Davidson County and restored order. After a brief show of force the commanding officer, Braxton Craven, assured the Governor that the county would be "perfectly quiet."⁹ This opposition to the conscription law was most intense in North Carolina because the law was applied most rigidly in the state. Of the 81,933 men secured for the Confederate army by this conscription law,

⁶ Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies the War of Rebellion (1880-1901), series IV, I, 1091. Hereinafter cited as Official Records.

⁷ Henry Clark to Braxton Craven, February 25, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁸ North Carolina Standard, April 9, 1862.

⁹ Braxton Craven to Henry Clark, August 5, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

21,348, or more than one fourth, and 7,000 more than from any other state, were drawn from North Carolina. While other governors did not help, but hindered the enforcement of this law, Governor Clark continued to co-operate with the Confederate Government in acquiring troops. The prevalent feeling among the people of North Carolina was that this was a war against arbitrary power and should be fought with volunteers. Standing armies and troops collected by draft were symbols of depotism. Why the conscription law should be so enforced in North Carolina, therefore, seems strange. The state supplied more volunteers than any other southern state, with the exception of Virginia; yet more were also drafted. One reason would be the fact that not all governors felt the same sense of duty that Henry Clark did in applying the draft law from April to September, 1862. Resistance to the draft was often in the form of open rebellion, but most often was fought in the courts. Henry T. Clark did not gain many friends in the state due to the approach he took in applying the draft law, but he did enforce the law as fairly as possible under the circumstances. Clark escaped much of the criticism connected with conscription due to the fact that the act took its full effect after the summer of 1862 and by this time Clark had been replaced by Zebulon Vance. This did not mean, however, that Clark managed to apply the draft law void of any criticism. Many in the state felt exemptions were unfairly given. William Holden in the North Carolina Standard in an editorial stated "we learn the . . . Governor has gone further than this, and exempted young men at college who had been drafted, and overseers of plantations, and the employees of the daily press."¹⁰ Holden went further and stated that the "people must not

be divided due to the misconduct and unequal treatment."¹¹ It seems then that some in the state felt Clark was not fair, but favored his own friends and party.

Many letters were written regarding Clark's association with the military. David Lowry Swain in a letter to Zebulon Vance warned him to watch and pick his aides wisely and carefully because "Governor Clark has taken sides with high soldiers."¹² Vance was in the process of a gubernatorial election at this time. In another instance, Thomas Garrett, wanting an appointment as Lieutenant-colonel, wrote Vance that, "I think Governor Clark has had his attention directed to me as a Whig politician of decided opinions and feelings, and the withholding of this tribute to me, which my companions in arms are willing to see accorded me, has been actuated by the same spirit of proscription which has governed him whole administration"¹³

It could safely be said that no North Carolina governor was entrusted with a larger responsibility in carrying out the will of the people. Clark came into power just as North Carolina was beginning to throw its weight into the southern cause. Military organization was more or less dependent upon him as commander-in-chief of the state forces, yet Clark more than succeeded. Governor Clark did more for the morale and good of the state

¹¹

Ibid.

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Frontis W. Johnston (ed.), The Papers of Zebulon Vance (1963), I, 154; David L. Swain to Zebulon Vance August 15, 1862. Hereinafter cited as Frontis Johnston, Zebulon Vance.

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Frontis W. Johnston, Zebulon Vance, I, 163; Thomas Garrett to Zebulon Vance September 1, 1862.

owed this man the credit for the efficiency and admirable discipline with which they fought in the war. It must be remembered, however, that Clark had just assumed office and that North Carolina had just seceded. Thus, the success Clark enjoyed could have been due to the support he received during the transition period. During the so called "honeymoon" periods politicians tend to co-operate with each other.

The next major task the governor had to face was the supplying and equipping of the various regiments. Clark lost no time in this area and surged forward with such force and vitality that, without contradiction, North Carolina troops throughout the war were the best supplied, best clothed, and best equipped soldiers in the entire Confederate Army. This could be attributed to the fact that North Carolina led other southern states in textile mills. North Carolina was the only southern state that furnished clothing for its troops during the entire war. Much of this work had its foundation in the administration of Henry T. Clark.

On April 16, 1861, the Federal Arsenal located at Fayetteville was seized and 37,000 guns captured upon the orders of Governor Ellis. This placed North Carolina ahead of most other southern states in regard to arms for her troops, but many more would be needed. Powder, shot, and other vital material would also be required. Realizing the importance of these supplies Governor Clark made the necessary arrangements.

Powder was one of the vital materials needed so badly at this critical time. The Raleigh Register on April 14, 1861, reported that Governor Ellis had ordered Professor Ebenezer Emmons, State Geologist, on an exploring tour, with a view to "ascertain whether and where a supply of lead and the essential elements of powder suited to the present exigencies, could be

obtained."¹⁴

It was not until August of the same year that the state geologist filed his report which indicated that "it . . . appears that parties may embark in the manufacture of powder with sufficient certainty that all the requisite materials may be obtained."¹⁵

Governor Clark took immediate action, once Professor Emmons turned in his report. The second session of the North Carolina legislature of 1861 authorized the governor to obtain a company for the manufacture of powder. The governor was to establish no more than four such companies nor give more than \$10,000 to any one of them.¹⁶ Governor Clark on September 4, 1861, entered into an agreement with G. B. Waterhous and Michael Bowes, who were partners in the Waterhouse and Bowes Company in the capital city. According to the terms of this agreement, the state would "purchase or lease for a term of five years a site for a powder mill in the county of Wake near the city of Raleigh"¹⁷

At first \$10,000 was appropriated for the purpose and the Raleigh Powder Mill was set up, but soon destroyed by explosion. Twelve thousand dollars was provided by the state for rebuilding. The powder mill was to be used, of course, to supply the necessary powder to North Carolina

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The Raleigh Register, April 14, 1861.

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Ebenezer Emmons to Henry Clark, August 13, 1861. The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

¹⁶

Public Laws of North Carolina, 2nd Extra Session, 1861, Chapter 2.

¹⁷

Contract between Henry Clark and G. B. Waterhouse and Michael Bowes, September 4, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

troops. The mill was later termed a "complete success."¹⁸

The powder mill was such a success that it paid the state of North Carolina back all the money it had been given plus furnishing the Confederate States of America with \$50,000 worth of powder. Much of this credit belongs to Governor Clark for he was the man most responsible for obtaining the necessary people and providing money to go ahead with such a project.

The procurement of arms was also a pressing problem to the state. Some organized regiments were having to drill and train without the necessary arms. Several reports mentioned the use of spears by some recruits. The Council of State on October 1, 1861, issued several resolutions it had adopted and one of these stated:

Be it Resolved by the Council of State that the Governor be advised to use all the means in his hands to procure arms, for the defense of the state.¹⁹

Governor Clark answered this call by the Council of State by sending agents to collect arms donated by patriotic citizens throughout the state. These arms along with those the state already had on hand were still not enough and fell far short of the required number. Clark then was forced to turn to other means.

In September, 1861, Governor Clark and Colonel John L. Peyton entered upon a strange and enterprising venture. According to the contract drawn up between these men, Colonel Peyton was to travel to Europe as an agent

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Official Records, Series IV, II, 184-185; Report of Adjutant-General James A. Martin to Zebulon Vance, October 1, 1861-September 30, 1862, The Governor Papers of Zebulon Vance, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

¹⁹

Report of the Council of State to Henry Clark, October 1, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

for the state of North Carolina. The purpose of this trip was the purchase of arms and munitions for the state of North Carolina. The terms of the contract in part were:

1. The amount of the contract is to be two hundred thousand dollars at the cash value of the arms and munitions in the European market where it shall be made.
2. The state agrees to pay upon delivery in any one of the seaports of the Confederate States of America, the aforesaid sum of two hundred thousand dollars, together with a premium or commission of thirty-three and one-third per cent upon the same, the payment to be made in sterling exchange, or in gold, or in cotton and naval stores . . .
3. The state also agrees to pay a prorata share of the cost of transportation, including insurance and other legitimate charges . . .
4. The delivery must be made on or before the first day of October A.D. 1862 if the blockade now existing of the ports of the Confederate States of America shall continue so long.²⁰

In this venture, Governor Clark as chief executive of the state was negotiating to buy arms in Europe. North Carolina was the only southern state to buy arms directly from European countries and was also ahead of the Confederate War Department in securing arms from Europe. Clark received the approval of the Council of State in correspondence dated October 1, 1861, for this radical decision. Clark sent agent Peyton to England in the fall of 1861 and the first shipment of supplies purchased abroad reached the shores of North Carolina in the spring of 1862. While the state now was in the business of purchasing arms and munitions in Europe, this did not mean that all attempts ceased to manufacture or seek arms within the state.

During the fall of 1861, General James Martin, Adjutant-General under Henry Clark, made arrangements on the advice of Governor Clark and the Convention to make contracts with North Carolina establishments. In the Wilmington area, General Martin managed to obtain the manufacture of sabres, swords, and bayonets. Shortly a large number was turned over to the troops. In Guilford County some mechanics entered into a contract to make 300 rifles per month. It has been ascertained that 10,000 rifles were received under this contract along. A large number of old arms were altered and repaired.²¹

In July, 1861, Governor Clark reached another agreement concerning arms. The agreement stated that a company would manufacture 400 rifles and bayonets, in two months. The state, the agreement stated, could pay one-half of the cost in North Carolina or Confederate War Bonds. This agreement stayed in effect for one year.²²

Arms collected from citizens, those purchased in Europe, and those manufactured in North Carolina were still insufficient in number and others were needed. In early 1862, Governor Clark issued a proclamation to the people of the state informing them that he was appointing agents in every county of the state to "borrow, purchase, and if necessary impress, all arms now in the hands of private citizens."²³ This was a radical step

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Clark, Histories of Regiments, p. 43.

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William L. Henry to Henry Clark, July 22, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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Proclamation of Governor Henry Clark, April 15, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

for the Clark administration to take, but the governor felt it was a necessary one. In the proclamation, the chief executive pointed out that no law gave his agents the right to take arms of private citizens, but since this was an emergency these measures were necessary. He enjoined the citizens of North Carolina "as an act of the highest patriotism and duty"²⁴ to turn over all their arms to the state agents. There is little evidence to show widespread resentment of this proclamation.

By these various means we find that it has been estimated by reliable authorities that the state of North Carolina obtained fifty-one thousand stands of arms and all the necessary equipment. All this was accomplished without aid from the Confederate government at Richmond. Most of the state's arms were collected during the Clark administration.

One perplexing problem facing the Clark administration was how to clothe the troops. Uniforms and blankets were the main requirements at this time. Governor Clark lost no time in surveying the problem and taking action. Clark wrote the Confederate Secretary of War, Leroy Walker, and expressed the desire for this type of equipment for North Carolina troops. Walker in his reply promised to do everything in his power to provide the necessary clothing, but pointed out the existence of the United States naval blockade. Walker stated that state governments would have to help in this venture.²⁵

Clark then proceeded as one of his first official acts as governor of the state to divide the state into districts according to counties.

²⁴

Ibid.

²⁵

Secretary of War Leroy Walker to Henry Clark, August 7, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Each sheriff was designated as an officer, whose duties were to collect blankets, woolen socks, garments, and any other useful articles and to send these to Raleigh with a list of contributors. By using this method, Clark gathered much needed supplies for the troops and properly disbursed them where needed most. There was still hope that the central government would be able to supply clothing to the troops, but by the fall of 1861 it became evident that they could not. In this state of affairs, Clark ordered General James Martin to provide winter clothing and shoes for North Carolina troops. This was no small order. General Martin made an energetic effort, however, Captain Charles Garrett, under the orders of General Martin, set up a "clothing manufactory" in Raleigh for the purpose of making cloth for blankets and uniforms.²⁶

In September, 1861, the state legislature passed a law requiring the governor to furnish the North Carolina troops with suitable clothing. Clark immediately entered into an agreement with the Confederate Quartermaster Department with regard to provision of clothing, shoes, and blankets. Under this agreement, North Carolina would receive commutation money and be responsible for clothing and supplying her own troops. Confederate agents seeking supplies agreed to stay out of North Carolina if the state would agree to sell its surplus, if any, to the Confederate Government.²⁷ This was a unique venture for a Confederate state for no other state

²⁶ Johnston, Zebulon Vance, I, 190; Clark, Histories of Regiments, pp. 6, 24, 28.

²⁷ Johnston, Zebulon Vance, I, 190; Abraham Charles Myers to Henry Clark, June 12, 1862.

followed such a course in the Civil War. Governor Clark continued to urge North Carolinians to support this effort and work for its own troops. Isaac W. Garrett, of Edgecombe County who had according to Clark "peculiar qualifications for clothing establishment work," was placed in charge of providing the clothes for North Carolina troops.²⁸ All the textile or cotton mills began to aid the state. One such example was the Fries Mills of Salem, North Carolina, which employed seventy-nine persons and supplied the state with cloth. In November of 1861, this company complained because no wool was being received from Texas. Francis Fries wrote to Governor Clark stating that when an order from the Confederate or state government arrived at his mill "everyone . . . had to stand aside."²⁹ Fries now asked Clark to allow him to export yarn outside the state in order to acquire wool from Georgia, South Carolina, or Virginia. Clark agreed to lift the embargo on yarn for this immediate need and also agreed to aid in expediting the arrival of the wool by writing to Richmond.³⁰

The ladies of the state turned their resources over to the state government by furnishing quilts and blankets. Many carpets were torn up, lined with cotton, and made into quilts. Through these combined efforts the troops of North Carolina were clothed during the first winter. While the clothing and equipment might not have been exactly according to army regulation, it did serve the purpose.

28

Henry Clark to Samuel Cooper, November 27, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

29

Francis Fries to Henry Clark, November 18, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

30

Francis Fries to Henry Clark, April 18, 1862; Henry Clark to Secretary Judah Benjamin, November 30, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Governor Clark dealt effectively with speculators, who appeared within the state. These men appeared from other states in order to buy all equipment and needed supplies during wartime with the idea of making a quick and easy profit. This attempt to remove war material or material considered vital, it was felt, would hinder the war effort in North Carolina.

On March 28, 1862, the chief executive proclaimed:

I do hereby prohibit the exportation beyond the limits of the state of all cotton and woolen goods except through the proper officers of the Confederate or state governments.³¹

As early as September, 1861, North Carolina had under the direction of Clark laid an embargo "on bacon, pork, fat hogs, beef or beef cattle, men's shoes, woolen goods, linseys, blankets, etc."³² The Adjutant-General of the state was directed to use force if necessary to prohibit the exportation of these cloth and foodstuff items as they were considered necessary to the people of the state during the present emergency. Other southern states began to issue embargoes also and they decided to co-operate with North Carolina. On April 18, 1862, Governor Francis Pickens of South Carolina in a letter addressed to Governor Clark stated:

We desire to act in concert with Georgia and North Carolina in relation to all breadstuffs, and with a view to be in perfect harmony. I would be glad if you would inform me if the exportation of any provisions of any kind has been prohibited from North Carolina, and if so please name them.³³

³¹ Proclamation of Henry Clark, March 28, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

³² Proclamation of Henry Clark, September 13, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

³³ Francis Pickens to Henry Clark, April 18, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Governor Pickens wrote that, "the strength and support of one state is the strength of every other state"³⁴ in this great struggle. Thus the southern states would have to draw on mutual stores in order to survive. The South Carolina executive seemed now to wish a combining or sharing of supplies with North Carolina. Clark, however, felt his first duty was to supply North Carolina and the people of the state first. The devotion of Clark and his sense of duty in regard to the people of North Carolina made him place their interest above all others.

Governor Clark in his continued search for state supplies also obtained an interest in a saltwork. In a letter written to Elisha Banner of Mt. Airy, Clark in June, 1862, informed Mr. Banner that he had appointed General John Morehead as a state agent. General Morehead, due to personal reasons, could not accept. Clark then appointed Nicholas Woodfin, who had already proceeded to the saltworks and was investigating all possibilities.³⁵ In due time the saltworks were contracted and helped supply the state troops.

The Clark administration did a remarkable job in raising troops, equipping the same, and providing food and clothing. This was no small job and it required a certain amount of leadership as well as a dedicated individual willing to sacrifice time and energy. This Clark was willing to do.

³⁴

Ibid.

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Henry Clark to Elisha Banner, June 14, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

CHAPTER IV

MILITARY PRISONS IN NORTH CAROLINA

One of the most perplexing and pressing problems of Governor Clark's administration, aside from raising and equipping troops, was the prison and prisoner of war problem. Clark had to decide where and how to maintain places of detention for the Federal troops located in North Carolina. The state found itself with war prisoners in the state very early in the war and then offered sites in North Carolina for prisons in order to relieve the state of Virginia.

How Governor Clark handled this difficult problem remains a high point in his career as governor. Effective, just, fair and expedient would be just a few adjectives that would describe his handling of this major problem. Henry T. Clark did not wait long for others to act before he would take the initiative himself.

Governor Henry Clark dealt effectively with the prison and war prisoner problem in North Carolina. The first war prisoners arrived in Raleigh on July 22, 1861. The forty or so prisoners were under the command of Lieutenant David H. Todd, half-brother of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln.¹ The prisoners were placed in the custody of Governor Clark. Clark, not wanting to embarrass the Confederate government at this time, assumed full command and placed the prisoners under the guard of a

¹
Official Records, Series 2, III, 695; Mack Trent, "Civil War Prisons and Prisoners in North Carolina, 1861-1865" (unpublished master's thesis, East Carolina College, (1961), p. 17. Hereinafter cited as Trent, "Civil War Prisons". William Best Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons: A Study in War Psychology (1930), p. 57. Hereinafter cited as Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons.

volunteer company. The people of the city were annoyed because the prisoners were held in a "house" inside the city limits.²

All supplies, finances, and food had to be supplied for each prisoner, since Richmond had furnished none. Clark assumed this responsibility and allowed the prisoners the parole of the town.³ The prisoners, while being treated fairly, were dissatisfied and in protest signed a petition demanding immediate release which was sent to the Governor.⁴

By July 29, 1861, Governor Clark was tired of the entire affair and proceeded to write Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Walker pointing out that the presence of Union prisoners in Raleigh was interfering with the Confederate recruitment program.⁵ Governor Clark also asked that no more Union prisoners be sent to Raleigh and what he should do with those already on hand.⁶

The communication of Clark was effective. The Confederate government in Richmond sent Lieutenant-Colonel Riddick to survey the war prisoner condition and problem in Raleigh and report back to Richmond. The report of Colonel Riddick was one of approval and praise concerning all the measures and actions made by Clark.⁷ Although Clark had also requested no new arrivals, several new prisoners arrived in Raleigh

² Official Records, Series 2, III, 696-697.

³ Official Records, Series 2, II, 695; Trent, "Civil War Prisons", p. 18.

⁴ Official Records, Series 2, II, 695-697.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Official Records, Series 2, II, 695-697.

⁷ Ibid., p. 699.

from Richmond. An angry Governor Clark dispatched another letter to the War Department demanding an end to the prisoner shipments to the city.⁸

This letter brought immediate response, because on August 8, Secretary Walker ordered Brigadier General Winder, then in command of Richmond prisoners, to suspend all prisoner shipments to Raleigh, unless upon actual consent of Governor Clark.⁹ No further instructions were forthcoming from Richmond concerning war prisoners in Raleigh. Governor Clark had waited patiently during this period of time.

Having received no word from the War Department, on October 25, 1861, Governor Clark moved his prisoners out of the city onto the state fairgrounds located near the city. A volunteer company was placed in charge. As stated before, the Confederate government provided no clothes or food for the prisoners and therefore Clark did this for the prisoners.¹⁰ Once more Clark took the initiative and wrote the War Department asking for secure winter quarters and a location more suitable and better equipped to handle prisoners of war.¹¹ In late December, 1861, Clark wrote another letter, before the War Department answered by removing the prisoners to Salisbury.¹²

The prisoners while in and around Raleigh received very favorable treatment from the townspeople. The credit for this lies mainly with

⁸ Official Records, Series 2, II, 1372.

⁹ Ibid., 700.

¹⁰ Ibid., 695-732; Robert H. Kellogg, Life and Death in Rebel Prisons (1867), p. 387.

¹¹ Official Records, Series 2, II, 732.

¹² Ibid.

Governor Clark since he took it upon himself to see that they were clothed and fed properly.¹³ A Union hospital steward named Butler, a regular prisoner of war, stated that the prison at Raleigh had adequate hospital facilities. Ample beds, an excellent surgeon, plus the care given to the sick and wounded made the prison appropriate in Butler's estimation.¹⁴ Clark was under no pressure or obligation to do all this, but the fact that Clark did help speaks for the character of the man.

The prisoners now were removed to the Confederate military prison located at Salisbury, North Carolina. Governor Clark played a large role in obtaining this camp, the first permanent war prison in the South.

The importance of Salisbury cannot be overlooked. This was the largest and only permanent military prison located in North Carolina. Why were there not more camps of detention in the state? There are several reasons. One was the presence of Federal troops in Virginia. Military prisoner of war camps would be unnecessarily close to the areas of fighting if located in North Carolina. Second, food and other supplies were needed for a prison and the Confederate officials felt the rich agricultural area of North Carolina could best serve General Lee. Third, citizens often complained when military prisons were placed in their vicinities. Fourth, Union sentiment was also strong in many areas of the state.

In June, 1861, Henry T. Clark wrote to the Confederate Secretary of War and informed him that he had taken over the responsibility for

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Official Records, Series 2, III, 695-732.

¹⁴

Ibid.

locating a prison site in North Carolina. The Confederate War Department had contacted Governor John Ellis before June requesting he select a place, if possible, suitable for the "safekeeping of our prisoners of war."¹⁵ Secretary Walker was interested in the Alamance County area, especially between Hillsboro and Greensboro, where large buildings had been found and where the authorities felt prisoners might be kept at little cost.¹⁶ Governor Clark now reported that all attempts in this area had proved futile and suggested that a site in the town of Salisbury be chosen.

Clark stated that Salisbury possessed railroad facilities, running North, South, and West. Clark further speculated that supplies would be abundant and available at low cost. "A very large and commodious building"¹⁷ could be purchased for only fifteen thousand dollars, which could easily and safely contain between fifteen hundred and two thousand prisoners of war. After the war Clark stated the same building could be sold for from thirty to fifty thousand dollars. The North Carolina governor went further and assured the Secretary of War that the state would furnish "proper troops for guard purposes."¹⁸

A few days afterward, the Governor sent Colonel William Johnston, acting as purchasing agent, to Salisbury to investigate the full possibilities of the Salisbury prison site. Johnston, after a month of

¹⁵ Official Records, Series 2, III, 681; Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons, p. 55; Trent, "Civil War Prisons", p. 35.

¹⁶ Official Records, Series 2, III, 681-682.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

surveying, reported to Clark that there was one large brick building formerly used as a cotton factory, three stories high and some fifty by ninety feet in dimension, and construction of good brick. Johnston also reported the availability of six brick tenements with four rooms each, and a large superintendent's house of framed material. Also included in the proposed site, comprising sixteen acres inside the city limits of Salisbury, was a blacksmith shop, two inferior buildings, and an engine house attached to the factory building. The area was shaded by a grove of oak trees and contained an adequate supply of good water.¹⁹ After his description of the contents of the site, Johnston explained that the property had once belonged to Maxwell Chambers, local cotton manufacturer. The property was in the hands of a Mr. D. A. Davis, executor, and was offered for fifteen thousand dollars.²⁰ The owners stated they would accept Confederate Bonds as payment or lease the property at the rate of one thousand dollars per year. Colonel Johnston felt it would require another two thousand dollars to put the site into working order.²¹

Governor Clark, upon receiving Johnston's report, sent it to the Confederate War Department for approval. Secretary Walker, on July 30, 1861, wrote Clark stating that the report was "satisfactory."²² Walker

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Official Records, Series 2, III, 694; Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons, p. 62. The countryside around Salisbury was rich in produce and vegetables.

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Official Records, Series 2, III, 692-695.

²¹

Ibid., 696.

²²

Ibid., 702.

suggested that Clark purchase the property immediately. He seemed pleased that Confederate Bonds could be used in the proposed sale. Secretary Walker also proposed that Governor Clark stand ready to begin the necessary repairs at once. A guard for the prison site was also mentioned in the correspondence.

Secretary Walker, after the Confederate victory at First Manassas, became anxious to occupy the prison site. Walker urged Clark to hasten preparations to the extent of his ability.²³ At the first opportunity Walker wanted to be notified that the site was ready to receive prisoners. Secretary Walker made no mention, however, of the fifteen thousand dollars needed for the actual sale; therefore, Governor Clark was unable to finalize the purchase or begin any type of preparations.²⁴

Changes occurred in the Confederate War Department at this time, with Judah P. Benjamin replacing Leroy Walker as Secretary of War and assuming all of the latter's functions and responsibilities. The plans for a military prisoner of war camp at Salisbury were either mislaid or forgotten in this change-over. For the next two and one-half months, no correspondence concerning this matter was exchanged.²⁵ By the end of this delayed period the Confederate War Department was in a desperate situation as the South was receiving an ever-increasing number of war prisoners. These prisoners had to be located in suitable confines. In the latter part of October, 1861, Secretary Benjamin made appeals to

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Official Records, Series 2, III, 702.

²⁴

Ibid.

²⁵

Ibid.

Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia and Governor A. B. Moore of Alabama to offer prisoner of war sites. Meanwhile, Governor Clark had grown increasingly impatient with the Confederate officials because they had not delivered the necessary funds to buy the Salisbury site. Clark informed Benjamin that the deal was still pending. Governor Clark, in the same communication, urged the immediate remittance of fifteen thousand dollars plus finances needed to renovate the site. The Governor went further and expressed the belief that all that was needed to put the site into immediate operation was a high plank palisade wall to enclose the entire area. A repair of the buildings and grounds would also be necessary but would require little actual work. Once these items were taken care of Governor Clark felt the prison could house immediately from four hundred to five hundred prisoners.²⁶

This communication by Clark was all that Benjamin needed to move into action. Benjamin immediately notified Colonel William Johnston, who made the original survey for the governor, to act as purchasing agent for the Confederate government. Benjamin instructed Colonel Johnston to reopen purchasing procedures, make the site operational at once, and make the site available to house two thousand prisoners and from eighty to one hundred guards. These orders presented Colonel Johnston with a large task since Governor Clark had estimated the site would be able to

house no more than five hundred prisoners.²⁷ A man of quick and decisive action, Johnston closed the sale of the Salisbury site with Confederate War Bonds, which he received from a government agent. The site was immediately prepared to house the number of prisoners suggested by Benjamin.

The efforts made by Henry T. Clark in aiding the Confederate government to secure its first permanent prisoner of war camp evidenced ulterior motives. Governor Clark wanted to relocate, as rapidly as possible, the increasing number of prisoners of war in Raleigh. As soon as Colonel Johnston concluded the sale on November 4, 1861, Clark began to badger Secretary Benjamin to allow the prisoners of war in Raleigh to be moved to Salisbury at the first opportunity. Clark pursued his aims by pointing out that seventy-three prisoners held at Fort Macon needed a permanent confine. In order to hasten the necessary repairs, Governor Clark suggested that the War Department contact D. A. Davis of Salisbury for acquiring aid in obtaining lumber and other supplies for the needed repairs.²⁸ The War Department, apparently, followed the suggestions of Governor Clark and the site was soon made ready for occupation by the Federal prisoners.

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This problem of the number of prisoners Salisbury could maintain was a major problem later. August 24, 1864, saw a new commander for Salisbury Prison in Major John H. Gee of the Eleventh Florida Regiment. Gee was chosen to command Salisbury due to his record as an organizer and administrator. When Major Gee arrived at the prison he found a prison which in his estimation should contain 2500 prisoners having a total prisoner population of 9,000. With the overcrowding and later guard shortage the conditions at Salisbury grew steadily worse after 1863. Official Records, Series 2, VIII, 675; Trent, "Civil War Prisons", p. 56.

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Official Records, Series 2, III, 738.

Before the repairs were actually completed, the first Federal prisoners of war arrived in Salisbury from Raleigh and caused excitement among the townspeople. These were the very first Union soldiers that many had seen.²⁹ One hundred and seventy-six more prisoners arrived by train in Salisbury on December 26, 1861. In February, 1862, eighty more prisoners arrived. Thus by the middle of March there were around fifteen hundred military and political prisoners located at Salisbury.³⁰

Although the repairs were not completely finished when the first prisoners arrived at Salisbury, the prison met with success. The most important problem of the site was the securing of sufficient guards. Governor Henry Clark assumed the initial responsibility in the summer of 1861, but to his dismay he found that the people of North Carolina would not enlist in units designed for such "degrading service" as the safeguarding of "Yankee" prisoners.³¹ Clark was considerably relieved when around one hundred and forty students and faculty members from Trinity College known as "Trinity Guards" volunteered their services. This force was led by their college president, the Rev. Dr. Braxton Craven.³²

Salisbury Prison had worked out so well that Clark invited the Confederate Government to locate a second military prison within the boundaries of North Carolina. Clark had in mind a small academy in

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Clark, Histories of Regiments, IV, 746.

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Ibid.

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Official Records, Series 2, III, 693.

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Nora Campbell Chaffin, Trinity College, 1839-1892 (1950), p. 223.

Iredell County, called Olin. Governor Clark indicated in correspondence with the War Department that opposition to a military prison in that area had abated. Clark in a report to the Secretary of War stated that the academy was located about twelve miles from Statesville, which was on the Western North Carolina Railroad, and that the site contained a large building, fifty by eighty feet and three and one-half stories high, plus two other large frame houses and ten acres of land. The price, as quoted by Henry Clark, was very cheap, only five hundred dollars for the buildings, plus a small charge for the grounds. Supplies needed to equip and feed such a venture were abundant.³³ Governor Clark offered a second site in order to aid the Confederate Government in locating war prisoners. The entire Olin Academy was eventually dropped for some reason by the War Department at Richmond. It was opened two years later as a co-educational high school.³⁴

By April, 1862, Governor Clark had completely changed his whole outlook in regard to the military camps in North Carolina. Clark expressed the desire to disband the prison at Salisbury due to the supply problem.³⁵ Adding to the Governor's change in attitude was the growing discontent of the people with the military prisons and the Confederate Government in that area of the state.

³³ Official Records, Series 2, III, 767.

³⁴ Salisbury Carolina Watchman, February 14, 1864.

³⁵ Official Records, Series 2, III, 855.

An exchange of prisoners in May, 1862, helped the problem since only a few officers and political prisoners remained.³⁶ After this initial exchange the importance of Salisbury Prison declined steadily. By May, 1863, Salisbury had almost ceased to exist as a prisoner of war site. May 4, 1863, saw fewer than twenty-five prisoners still detained there, the rest being paroled or exchanged, or sent as enlistments in the Confederate Army. The remaining prisoners were "the worst, most inveterate cases."³⁷

For an extended period of time after May, 1863, Salisbury Prison almost went out of existence. In October, 1864, General U. S. Grant ordered no more prisoner exchanges and Salisbury began to thrive again. This move on the part of the Northern high command meant that the Confederate States faced a prison shortage. Salisbury, and other prisons in the South, were sent large numbers of prisoners until overcrowding became a problem. With overcrowded prisons and understaffed administrative units at the prisons, conditions grew worse.³⁸

Several of the prisoners who survived these severe conditions later wrote vivid accounts of their experiences. Two of the most famous

³⁶ Salisbury Carolina Watchman, May 25, 1862; The Stars and Stripes in Rebellion, A Series of Papers Written by Federal Prisoners in Richmond, Tuscaloosa, New Orleans, and Salisbury, N. C. (1962), p. 125.

³⁷ Salisbury Carolina Watchman, May 4, 1863.

³⁸ The problem of guards plagued Salisbury after this increase in prisoners. The prison commanders found that one-half of the guards were called to the battlefield in Virginia. Less pay and equipment was issued to prison guards so this tended to make this type of service less attractive. The issue of rations at best was irregular and this caused discontent. The quality of guards declined until by late 1864 and early 1865 Junior and Senior Reserves were serving as guards.

accounts of this type were authored by Junius H. Browne and Albert D. Richardson. Both of these men were war correspondence for the Chicago Tribune during the war.

Junius Browne in describing his stay at Salisbury began on a light note. The reason for Mr. Browne's hope upon first reaching Salisbury was the fact that the prisoners were given the "privilege of the yard."³⁹ Exercising in the open air was a luxury for most prisons and games were even played by the prisoners. This attitude quickly changed, however, as Browne became more familiar with Salisbury. The room in which he stayed was described in his account as "hung round with vermin, which the wretched inmates used as clothes and bed covering . . . no light of any kind was furnished us."⁴⁰ Mr. Browne closed his account by stating that he felt himself unable to describe adequately the "repulsiveness and superlative squalor" of Salisbury.⁴¹

Albert Richardson, appearing before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, stated that he arrived at Salisbury Prison on February 3, 1864, and remained there until his escape on December 18, 1864. Richardson

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Junius Henri Browne, Four Years in Secessia: Adventures Within and Beyond the Union Lines: Embracing a Great Variety of Facts, Incidents, and Romance of the War (1865), p. 315. Hereinafter cited as Browne, Four Years in Secessia.

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Willard W. Glazier, The Capture The Prison Pen and the Escape, Giving an Account of Prison Life in the South, Principally at Richmond, Danville, Macon, Savannah, Charleston, Columbia, Mellin, Salisbury and Andersonville; Describing the Arrival of Prisoners, Plans of Escape, With Incidents and Anecdotes of Prison Life; Embracing also, the Adventures of an Escape From Columbia, South Carolina, Recapture, Trial as a Spy, and Final Escape from Sylvania, Georgia (1866), p. 309. Hereinafter cited as Glazier, The Capture The Prison Pen.

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Glazier, The Capture The Prison Pen, p. 308.

stated further that for months Salisbury was the "most endurable prison" he had seen with the prisoners being "comparatively well fed and kindly treated."⁴² Then in October, 1864, several thousand regular prisoners of war arrived and Salisbury changed "into a scene of cruelty and horror. . . ."⁴³ Prisoners, Richardson stated, often went twenty-four to forty-eight hours with no food of any type.

The cases of these prisoners seem to indicate that as long as the prisoner population was low the care and food they received was adequate. After October, 1864, the conditions grew worse mainly due to overcrowding. It must be remembered that the war was drawing to a close and supplies as well as personnel were low. In Salisbury, as in other Southern prisons, the main cause of death was diseases such as typhoid and scurvy. Diarrhea, insanity, and blindness were also common among the prisoners. A report of a Captain Louis R. Fortescue summed up the case for Salisbury:

the long continued filthy and crowded condition here, with foul and insufficient water, the constant exposure to the burning sun and chilling dews, with scant and insufficient clothing, and without shelter, the great scarcity of fuel for warming and cooking purposes, the inferior quality of food, the almost total absence of vegetable diet, together with harsh personal treatment, causing great bodily suffering and mental anxiety, all combined to induce and aggregate these diseases.⁴⁴

The officials in Richmond realized that the prisons were badly in need of improvements and supplies. Samuel Cooper, Adjutant-General and Inspector General of the Confederate Army, sent his assistant, General T. W. Hall

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Glazier, The Capture The Prison Pen, p. 304.

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Ibid.

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Pennsylvania at Salisbury, North Carolina-Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Memorial Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the National Cemetery at Salisbury, North Carolina (1910), p. 57.

to Salisbury for an on-the-site inspection of the conditions which existed there. The final report of General Hall was made in February, 1865, and stated in part:

That they have not received the full amount of fuel due them during a season of more than ordinarily inclemency I think is chargeable more probably to want of energy on the part of the post quartermaster, Captain J. M. Goodman⁴⁵

This inspection and report came in the closing months of the war so no improvements were made.

We find then that the Salisbury Prison during the Clark administration while not an ideal or perfect place of detention, nevertheless, was better than it was to become. Why did Salisbury become infamous after the administration of Clark? It has been mentioned before that as the war progressed the shortages grew more acute. Clark had mentioned shortages as early as 1862. Confederate officials were more interested in supplying and feeding troops than prisoners. As more troops were called to the areas of fighting, the number of guards had to use methods that were somewhat harsher than had been necessary before.

The blame for the conditions inside Salisbury cannot be laid upon the Shoulders of Governor Clark nor Governor Vance for it must be remembered that Salisbury "was administered exclusively by Confederate officials."⁴⁶ Clark could be blamed for obtaining the prison or allowing the prison in the state in the first place, but not for the conditions which existed there later.

⁴⁵ Official Records, Series 2, VIII, 39; Report of General T. W. Hall to General Samuel Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector General of the Confederate Army.

⁴⁶ Trent, "Civil War Prisons", p. 6.

CHAPTER V

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1861-1862

In 1861 the major fighting ended with the First Battle of Bull Run. This did not, however, mean that all hostile activities were halted. The Union now turned its attention to eastern North Carolina. The Federal officials were aware that the control of the eastern one-third of the state depended upon control of the five sounds and four rivers in this area.¹ Before control of these sounds and rivers could be obtained the outer banks must be captured.

North Carolina realized the importance of these same areas and had started very early to defend them. The legislature of North Carolina created the Military and Naval Board to co-ordinate defenses for the state. This board under the chairmanship of Warren Winslow worked closely with the governor in all state military matters.² Generals Walter Gwynn and Theophilus Holmes were given command of two departments of coastal defense. At each inlet, cutting through the outer banks, forts were constructed; Fort Fisher at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, Fort Ocracoke at Ocracoke Inlet, and Forts Hatteras and Clark at Hatteras Inlet. The latter two guarded the main inlet north of Beaufort.

These forts were constructed under the most trying conditions. All the necessary items not only to build the forts, but to survive while building them had to be brought in by boat. Heavy guns had to be

¹ Sounds located in North Carolina are Currituck, Albemarle, Pamlico, Core, and Bogue. Rivers on the coast of North Carolina include the Chowan, Roanoke, Tar-Pamlico, and Neuse-Trent.

² Daniel H. Hill, North Carolina in the War Between the States--Bethel to Sharpsburg (1926), I, 155.

transported from Norfolk, Virginia. Despite these disadvantages and a labor supply problem, solved by the use of Negro slaves, the forts were finally finished by the middle of June, 1861. Hatteras was the most important fort due to its strategic location and the fact that it was at this time the state's busiest port.

The first troops to arrive on the outer banks did so in early May. While the work on the forts was being completed by the slaves, there was little for the troops to do. The members of the army whiled away their time in various fashions. Governor Clark reported to the Military Board on one occasion that "intoxication to an alarming extent prevails among the officers and men."³ As a second line of defense the state sent five small armed vessels to the coast. The job of this "Mosquito Fleet" as it was dubbed by many was not only to protect the sounds, rivers, and towns but to raid any Federal shipping that might appear off the coast of North Carolina.

In the early part of the summer of 1861, the United States Navy Department at the suggestion of General Benjamin F. Butler ordered a joint army-navy expedition against Hatteras, North Carolina. The primary objective of this force was to put a stop to the raiding activities of the "Mosquito Fleet" along the North Carolina coast. Several ships had already been lost to the North Carolina raiders. The Federal officials planned to first destroy Forts Hatteras and Clark and second to obstruct the channel through which the raiders passed on their way to the open sea.

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Henry Clark to Warren Winslow, July 11, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

On August 26, 1861, a Federal squadron of seven warships mounting 143 guns left Hampton Roads.⁴ Eight hundred and eighty troops accompanied this force. By the next morning the Federal ships were off the coast of Hatteras. At this time Hatteras was under the command of Colonel William Martin. Colonel Martin had a force of no more than 400 troops on the island. Reinforcements were asked for by Martin and he hoped the Federals would delay attacking until these could arrive. The attack, however, commenced on August 28th. The Federals started by a bombardment upon Fort Clark. Under the protection of the bombardment 318 Federal troops and two large guns were landed on the beach. The fleet continued to shell the island all day. The defenders of Fort Clark used all available ammunition and when the supply was exhausted they withdrew to Fort Hatteras. During the night heavy seas were present and the Federal ships were forced to withdraw, this left the landing party of 318 men and two guns alone on the island with the Confederate force. This bit of bad luck worried the Federal Commanders for this gave the Confederates an advantage. The defenders of Fort Hatteras could reinforce the fort and take prisoners while the Federal troops on land did not have the protection of the Federal fleet.

During the night of August 28th, Commodore Samuel Barron, Chief of Confederate Coastal Defenses, landed on Hatteras with reinforcements numbering 230 men. Barron started immediately to repair the damage to the fort and make plans to retake Fort Clark. At a council of war the

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The Federal warships were the U.S.S. Minnesota, Susquehanna, Pawnee, Monticello, Harriet Lane, Cumberland, and Wabash.

other officers rejected the plans of Commodore Barron and they were never put into effect.

The next morning, August 29th, the Federal fleet moved in closer and resumed the shelling they had started the previous day. Three hours later the Confederate garrison of around 700 men surrendered after the officers decided that "holding out longer would only result in a great loss of life" ⁵ General Butler's orders were to leave Hatteras once the channel had been blocked. Butler sensed the importance of Hatteras so he disobeyed orders and left Colonel Rush C. Hawkins and a small force of Federal troops to hold Hatteras for the Union. Forts Ocracoke and Oregon were abandoned by the Confederates with no fight.

In the North the news of the capture of Hatteras was received joyously. The same was not true in the South, especially in North Carolina.

The Raleigh Register in an editorial asked:

Why did not our force of seven or eight hundred men kill, drive into the sea, or capture the enemy's force of three hundred or four hundred men who spent the night six hundred yards of our troops. ⁶

This question was discussed and debated by many people in the state. Why did North Carolina lose Hatteras? The engineers who constructed the forts were censured for lack of skill, the Ordnance Department was censured because it should have provided better guns and shells, and once again allegations of drunkenness, inefficiency, and even cowardice came up. The Confederate Congress in Richmond wanted the true story of Hatteras.

⁵
Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion (1880-1927), Series I, VI, 139; John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (1963), p. 43.

⁶
The Raleigh Register, September 11, 1861.

Governor Clark came under heavy criticism from many quarters of the state. The state legislature asked Clark for a report on the disaster of Hatteras. The legislature notified Governor Clark that he was requested to order courts of inquiry to inquire into the causes for the evacuation of Forts Oregon and Ocracoke and "whether such evacuation was necessary" ⁷ Governor Clark in September, 1861, directed his reply to these charges and demands to the Speaker of the House of Commons, William T. Dortch. Clark informed the legislative body that when the Federal squadron sailed from Hampton Roads on August 26th, General Huger in Norfolk sent a telegram the next morning informing the North Carolina executive of the Federal move. The telegram, Clark stated, was not in his possession until 11 a.m. and Wilmington and New Bern were immediately notified. Clark stated further that he ordered volunteers and state militia to the area. The fort was isolated but capable of defending itself, Clark believed. Clark ended his report to the legislature by stating, "I don't see that any censure can be attached to the state authorities for its capture --- and as for the garrison that sustained it." ⁸ Clark indicated that other causes should be investigated. After the shock and surprise of the Hatteras disaster had taken full effect the people settled down to find worthwhile reasons for this dreadful occurrence. It was the

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Resolution passed by the State Legislature of North Carolina, September 3, 1861, Legislative Documents 1861, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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Henry Clark to William Dortch, September 5, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

consensus of most reliable authorities that "the accurate fire of the Union fleet brought about the surrender of the forts."⁹

Governor Clark in a letter to S. L. Fremont stated that according to his reports, "Hatteras sustained the heaviest and most incessant firing that this country ever witnessed" and "an eyewitness remarked . . . he did not conceive that any fort on the Atlantic Coast could withstand such."¹⁰ Clark also pointed out that the garrison had fought bravely, but once again it was the armament which assailed the forts which caused their downfall.

Clark seemed to dislike criticism in this case. He felt the people were blaming him for the disaster and he had done what he thought was his utmost to defend North Carolina. In order to reduce this criticism or maybe to shift the thinking of the people of the state to other areas Clark now urged the people to close ranks, "act together with concert and vision"¹¹ and not to "indulge in fault finding"¹² This technique of presenting the horrors of war, the need for unity, and patriotism seemed to be the favorite method of Clark to quell criticism and to achieve those measures he wanted passed in the state legislature. Not to agree would almost be un-sympathetic to the Confederate cause and the South.

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Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, p. 45; J. M. Merrill, "The Hatteras Expedition, August, 1861", North Carolina Historical Review, XXIX (April, 1925), 217.

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Henry Clark to S. L. Fremont, September 2, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

11

Henry Clark to William Dortch, September 5, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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Ibid.

With the Federal troops still in possession of Hatteras the citizens of eastern North Carolina began to ask Governor Clark for protection. It was obvious to many people that a battle would soon have to take place to decide who would control eastern North Carolina. The logical location for this battle was Roanoke Island. This island guarded the entrance to Albemarle Sound and was the key to eastern North Carolina. The governor, during this time, was "unjustly criticized by many North Carolinians for not doing more to protect the coast."¹³ John W. Graham felt the governor was "still in a stupor"¹⁴ and another person stated that no one questioned Clark's patriotism but felt that his total incapacity is so obvious that it is becoming the subject of everyday remark."¹⁵ Clark was doing his best as he saw it. Letters and telegrams were sent to Richmond asking aid and pointing out the importance of the North Carolina coastal area. The coastal defenses of North Carolina had been placed under the control of the Confederate authorities in Richmond, so this removed most of the influence or power Clark might have over them.

In asking for help to defend the coast of North Carolina Clark pointed to the large number of troops North Carolina had furnished to Virginia. Clark went further and reminded the Confederate Secretary of

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Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, p. 60.

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John A. Graham to Father, September 22, 1861, W. A. Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, p. 60.

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David Shenck Journal, September 11, 1861, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

War that "this state besides arming her own volunteers in Virginia has loaned the state of Virginia 13,000 stands of arms but our liberality has exhausted our supply and I am trying to buy rifles and shotguns."¹⁶ The Confederate War Department answered that all trained troops were needed in Virginia and only new recruits were available for North Carolina. Brigadier-General Richard C. Gatlin was given command of the Department of North Carolina. The War Department stated that President Jefferson Davis did not want to send back any trained troops for this weakening of the forces in Northern Virginia might be exactly what the North wanted.

Governor Clark in other correspondence to the War Department stated that he had heard rumors of large fleets leaving New York and Fortress Monroe for North Carolina. Clark pointed out that the troops in North Carolina were too few, too scattered, and were primarily undrilled disorganized militia. Indication was given in this series of correspondence that Clark understood the policy of Davis, but a hope was expressed in a letter dated October 25, 1861:

...of our situation and slender means a hope that when a change of policy was discovered on the other side and their demonstrations on our coast become settled invasion--there might be a corresponding change in your policy.¹⁷

Clark was undoubtedly hoping that if the Confederate government was convinced the Federal troops did plan to attack and invade North Carolina,

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Henry Clark to L. P. Walker, September 8, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; D. H. Hill, Bethel to Sharpsburg, I, 185.

¹⁷

Henry Clark to Judah Benjamin, October 25, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

then President Davis and the War Department would relent and send trained troops back into North Carolina.

General Gatlin placed General D. H. Hill in charge of the defense of Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and General Joseph Anderson in charge of Wilmington. These commanders began to make what preparations they could in order to defend coastal areas of North Carolina in case of attack. While these Confederate plans were being carried out the Union authorities were making plans in regard to North Carolina also. The Union plans were to first take Roanoke Island then push on to Goldsboro and Raleigh. Second, Union troops would take control of the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad and by so doing destroy the communications south of Richmond and place Federal forces behind the Army of Northern Virginia. Governor Henry Clark also realized these facts and observed that, "the loss of the island would mean the abandonment of Norfolk with its important Navy yard."¹⁸

Clark's letters failed to arouse the top Confederate officials but did achieve some success. Stephen R. Mallory, Confederate Secretary of the Navy, stated that the affair of Hatteras Inlet was a serious blow and demanded energetic action on the part of the Confederate States to see that a second such incident did not occur. Mallory gave his permission to take guns "rifled for New Orleans if necessary to repel or keep back the foe."¹⁹ Not satisfied at merely communicating with

¹⁸ Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Series I, IX 156.

¹⁹ Stephen Mallory to Judah Benjamin, October 25, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

Richmond, Clark also corresponded with General Gatlin now head of coastal defenses in North Carolina. Clark presented to Gatlin the argument that Roanoke Island contained "neglected defenses, and critical position."²⁰ The Governor pointed out to Gatlin that the state of North Carolina would aid him all it could; however, Clark wanted to make sure the central government in Richmond did not lean too heavily upon him as governor.

On January 11, 1862, Admiral L. M. Goldsborough and a fleet of Federal warships along with 15,000 troops under the command of General Ambrose P. Burnside sailed for the North Carolina coast. Due to bad seas and making necessary repairs, it was not until February 7, 1862, that this fleet neared Roanoke Island.

The defense of Roanoke Island centered around three forts. They were Forts Huger, Blanchard, and Bartow. An old canal boat was sunk and eight guns placed on the deck to form Fort Forrest. On the east side of the island two guns were set up and named Ballast Point. In the center of the island a three-gun battery was named Fort Russell. Colonel H. M. Shaw was in command of the island and had approximately 1,434 troops on the island. The "Mosquito Fleet" under the command of Commodore W. F. Lynch was also present.

When word of the Federal force approaching the coast of North Carolina reached Raleigh grave concern was expressed. Governor Clark wrote Weldon N. Edwards, President of the Secession Convention, that

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Henry Clark to Richard Gatlin, December 18, 1861, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

all volunteer forces had been ordered to the coast and placed under the command of Confederate officials. Clark warned Edwards:

The forces thus forwarded and assigned have been necessarily stationed at so many different points on our extended coast, that they cannot readily be collected to meet an attack at any particular point, which the enemy might select.²¹

Clark stated that the state must depend on its own forces and these were untrained militia that had just begun to hold weekly drills.

The Federal fleet opened with a bombardment on the morning of February 7, 1862. Troops were also landed on this same date. Under moderate to heavy fire the Confederate troops retreated to the Northern end of the island and after a short period of time surrendered. The "Mosquito Fleet" heavily outnumbered withdrew to Elizabeth City, but their stay was short-lived. By February 10, Elizabeth City was in Federal hands.

After the fall of Roanoke Island, criticism of state officials and military commanders came from many quarters. The Secession Convention asked Clark for a report as to why, after Hatteras, a second disaster at Roanoke could occur. K. P. Battle in writing a report of the activities of the Secession Convention reported that the convention held a secret meeting in Raleigh and discussed the Roanoke Island calamity and the "total incapacity of . . . Governor Clark."²² Governor Clark responded to this criticism by communicating with the President of the Convention.

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Henry Clark to Weldon N. Edwards, January 21, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

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K. P. Battle, "The Secession Convention of 1861, "North Carolina Booklet, XV (April, 1916), 197.

In his reply Clark stated that the Confederate commander at Norfolk, General Huger, changed the commanders of Roanoke Island quiet often. In fact, Clark continued, the commanders were changed so often that no one of them stayed long enough to "mature its defenses." Clark felt that "if under the change of commanders and apparent neglect of the government, Roanoke Island has been left without proper defense the responsibility could not rest with the Executive of the State."²³ Clark stated that he had no authority to detail or appoint officers to the area or to alter or in any manner interfere with the batteries or forces on Roanoke Island. While Clark received his share of criticism others came under fire also, including General Gatlin. Gatlin, many people in the state charged, was guilty of not inspecting the troops on Roanoke to see that they were properly prepared, not examining the fortifications, plus the fact that he was not present when the attack occurred.

The loss of Roanoke, while it did raise a furor of criticism also produced some worthwhile effects. The North Carolina Standard ran a headline, "To Arms!" "To Arms!" and on the same date Clark in a letter to Secretary of War Judah Benjamin stated that the invasion on Roanoke has "infused quite a spirit of volunteering for the war, within the last two days seven companies have tendered themselves-- and I hear of many more recruiting successfully."²⁵

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Henry Clark, Governor's Papers; Clark to Weldon Edwards, February 17, 1862; Henry T. Clark Letterbook, p. 258.

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The North Carolina Standard, February 17, 1862; Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, p. 89.

²⁵

Henry Clark, Governor's Papers; Clark to Judah Benjamin, February 17, 1862.

This volunteering and the fact that some emotionalism was dying out must have brought some of the state leaders some second thoughts for on February 18, 1862, the convention that had criticized Clark earlier now passed a resolution which said in part:

Thanks of Convention are due to his Excellency Governor Henry T. Clark, for the active . . . and energetic manner in which he urged upon the consideration of the Confederate government, the defenses of North Carolina.²⁶

The Federal troops now began to branch out. On February 11, 1862, Edenton was visited by the United States troops and supplies taken. The small town of Winton on the Chowan River was burned. With Roanoke Island in Federal hands. General Burnside looked toward New Bern. General D. H. Hill, commander of the Albemarle and Pamlico Sound area resigned and went to Virginia. Hill's area of command was now divided and given to Generals L. O'B. Branch and Henry A. Wise. New Bern was in the area commanded by General Branch. Richard C. Gatlin was still the overall commander of the entire coastal area of North Carolina. General Branch had 4,000 untried troops with him at New Bern. With this force Branch had to meet General Burnside with 8,000 seasoned troops. On March 13, 1862, the Federal troops began their march toward New Bern, having come part of the way by water. The troops were divided into three columns, Generals John Foster, Jesse Reno, and John Parke commanding. A fleet of gunboats went along the Neuse River for support purposes.

The Confederate line of defense was not very strong and the army finding a small unguarded gap poured through. The Confederate forces

retreated in confusion. Faced with a break in his defenses and outnumbered two to one, Branch moved his army to Kinston. New Bern was now safely in the hands of the federals and was to remain so for the duration of the war.

Due to the apparent ease with which the federals captured New Bern, General Gatlin was severely criticized and removed from command. Many critics of Gatlin claimed he stayed in his headquarters at Goldsboro and tried to carry out his duties by letter writing. Clark stated that the courage of Gatlin was questioned because once again Gatlin was not present on the battlefield.²⁷ Gatlin's replacement was General Theophilus Holmes, North Carolina's ranking general in the Confederacy.²⁸

While resting in New Bern, General Burnside received word that the Confederate government had built ironclads in Norfolk and planned to send them to the Albemarle area by way of the Dismal Swamp and Currituck Canal. Realizing the danger to the Federal positions at Roanoke, Burnside ordered General Reno to move a force of men to South Mills and halt the advance of the ironclads. General Reno left New Bern with a force of 3,000 men and travelled by water to Elizabeth City and then on with Colonel A. R. Wright and for three hours the Confederates with a force of 700 men held off the superior Union force. The Confederates finally withdrew one mile and at nightfall the Union troops withdrew completely and returned to New Bern.

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Official Records, Series I, IX, 250-251.

²⁸

Ibid.

Eastern North Carolina was now in the hands of the Federal Government from New Bern to the Virginia line. If Federal occupation was to remain supreme Burnside felt he must also take control of Fort Macon. Fort Macon guarded the city of Beaufort and Beaufort Inlet, the only entrance through the outer banks not in Federal hands. Also Burnside felt before he could safely advance on Goldsboro and Raleigh, Fort Macon must be captured. Burnside ordered General Parke to advance toward Fort Macon and from March 18th until March 23rd the towns of Havelock, Carolina City, Morehead City, and finally Beaufort were occupied by Federal forces. The Union troops moved methodically, since there was no resistance. The advance to Beaufort followed the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad which connected New Bern and Beaufort. In the meantime a shortage of railroad cars and locomotives caused a delay of the major part of the overall campaign, which was the capture of Goldsboro, Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, and Raleigh, until the necessary materials and quipment could arrive. The railroad rolling stock in the New Bern area had been turned over to the Confederate officials before the fall of New Bern and had been used to remove valuable supplies and materials.²⁹

General Parke began his campaign against Fort Macon by offering to permit the commander of Fort Macon, Colonel Moses White, to surrender; Colonel White refused the offer. To try and defend Fort Macon against this overwhelming force was futile. White was short on ammunition and had only some 300 men fit for duty. Beginning on April 25, 1862, an eleven hour bombardment was carried out against Fort Macon. Macon was

Charles L. Price, "North Carolina Railroads During the Civil War," Civil War History, VII (September, 1961), 306; Charles L. Price, "North Carolina Railroads," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 1956), p. 169.

to protect Beaufort against a sea attack; therefore, its guns were of the horizontal type and of no use against a land attack. Union batteries were very successful with most of their shells striking the fort. At four o'clock a truce was asked for and the surrender of the fort soon followed.

With Roanoke Island, New Bern, and Fort Macon in Federal hands gunboats of the United States Navy could easily control eastern North Carolina. In the spring of 1862 Washington and Plymouth were occupied. With the Federals in such complete control there was present in eastern North Carolina a strong Union sentiment. In May, 1862, President Lincoln taking note of this sentiment appointed Edward Stanly as military governor of North Carolina. Stanly was a native of North Carolina, but living in California. He was sincere in his belief in Unionism, but could not condone the behavior of Federal troops in the area and resigned his office in January, 1863.

General Burnside in the spring of 1862 began to consolidate his men and supplies for his next offensive. Orders arrived telling Burnside to correlate his actions with those of General McClellan, who was beginning the Peninsula Campaign in Virginia. Burnside settled for raids while waiting for further orders. The Peninsula became bogged down and it was not until June 25, 1862, before General McClellan ordered Burnside to march on Goldsboro with all the forces he could muster. A scant three days later, however, orders arrived from President Lincoln telling Burnside to go immediately to Virginia and help McClellan as he was being driven from Chickahominy. By July 6, Burnside had left for the battlefields of Virginia. General Foster, with 9,000 men, was left in command

of the Department of North Carolina. This force Foster felt was insufficient for a major offensive against Goldsboro and Raleigh. It would be December before the necessary forces would arrive for this campaign. In the meantime, General Foster built fortifications where Federal troops were in command of the area and limited his activities to scouting and raiding. Confederate saltworks at Currituck and Bogue Inlets were destroyed on one such raid.

The control of eastern North Carolina by Federal forces was a severe blow to the Confederate government. A rich source of foodstuffs that would become increasingly important to the Confederacy had been lost. The army of Northern Virginia was now facing the problem of an attack from the rear. Norfolk, a major naval yard, was severely hindered in its operations due to the Federal control of waterways in North Carolina. Many of these things, Clark had earlier tried to impress upon the officials in Richmond to no avail.

Governor Clark and other state officials were still worried over the activities of General Foster at New Bern. He might at any moment strike out toward Raleigh. Clark felt General Robert E. Lee still knew the importance of the railroad at Goldsboro and how important it was for Lee's army, but Clark felt Lee did not understand the "individual and state loss" in property and crops. Clark urged Lee to send an expedition to drive the Federals from eastern North Carolina as it was now "swarming with Yankees, Negroes and Traitors."³⁰

General Lee replied that he knew of the depredations of the Union army and could understand Clark's position. The Confederate leader pointed out, however, that all districts and points could not be properly protected. The major fighting was in Virginia, Lee stated, and if the Confederate forces failed there then the major battleground could be North Carolina. General Lee then refused to weaken his own lines of defense and left North Carolina to protect itself with the small commands already in the state.³¹

Since Clark was to leave office in September, 1862, the campaigns of Hatteras, Roanoke Island, and the New Bern-Fort Macon campaign ended the military activities in the state during his short administration.

Governor Clark came under major criticism from many areas of North Carolina for the disasters of Hatteras and Roanoke Island. Clark stated that he did all in his power as chief executive. The defenses were in the hands of the central government at Richmond and not in the hands of the governor of North Carolina. Existing records bear out the fact that Clark was a prolific letter writer and that he corresponded repeatedly with the commanders in the field as well as the authorities in Richmond. In this correspondence Clark stated what he felt should and should not be done. Could Clark have done more? It is entirely possible Clark could have reserved equipment and troops and not loaned or supplied them to Richmond, but this would have been out of character for Clark. Clark could have used the prestige and power of his office to achieve many things instead of relying too much on the official in Richmond.

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Robert E. Lee to Henry Clark, August 8, 1862, The Governor Papers of Henry Clark, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

W. W. Holden, a critic of Clark, stated that Clark's policy seemed to be "the last man and the last dollar"³² in order to help win the war. This could explain why Clark was unpopular in certain areas. It would seem then that the biggest fault of Clark was that he depended too much on officials in Richmond instead of taking the initiative himself, in military affairs. It should not be overlooked, however, that this argument was also used many times by Clark. Wartime was not a time to find fault and the people of the state had to unite and work for a common goal--winning the war. This to Clark constituted patriotism and was of the utmost importance.

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H. W. Raper, "William W. Holden and the Peace Movement in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, XXI (October, 1954), 493-466.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL ROLE OF HENRY CLARK, 1861-1862

Henry Clark was not ambitious to conduct the affairs of North Carolina during wartime. By an act of fate, Clark had been pushed into a job he had not sought. The new governor disliked conflict and wished to maintain settled policies. Had it been a period of peace, Clark would have tried to maintain the status quo. Wartime forced Clark to be a man of action in certain areas. Being sensitive to criticism, the political conflicts and criticism due to military disasters were more than Clark could cope with as governor.

Governor Henry Clark was not a great political leader. The role that best suited Clark was that of administrator. As an administrator, Clark was not the best but had sufficient ability in this area to accomplish a great deal for the state. The equipage of troops, troop organization, and the military prison at Salisbury support this argument. Clark was aided in his administration by capable aides such as his Adjutant-General, James G. Martin. Clark managed during his administration to maintain the respect of both political parties. As is often the case, when a person tries to remain neutral, both sides or political parties ignored Clark. The Confederate party, of which Clark was a member, respected Clark as a man of character, but they needed a political leader.

The act of secession had just been completed when Clark assumed the governorship in July, 1861. Co-operation among the people and

institutions of the state was still workable. This co-operation, as is often the case, declined with each passing day. Clark brought to the office of governor the virtues of being prudent, wise, candid, and upright. Thus, the administration of Governor Clark accomplished many things for the state.

The fact remains, however, that even though Clark possessed these attributes, he was no great political leader.¹ Clark tried to remain aloof from politics and please all factions as far as his conscience would allow. This attempt at fairness caused friction and dislike from both parties.

As Clark took office, a new political party was being created in North Carolina. The pre-Civil War Democrats and secessionists were now being called Confederates. The Confederate party was almost identical with the old Democratic party.² The North Carolina Standard, quoting the Richmond Enquirer which was the chief spokesman for the Confederate party, sets forth the views of this party:

All laws ought to be silent except military laws. We regard all judges and courts, State and Federal, all Congresses and legislatures as a nuisance, save in so far as they help us to strengthen the hands of the commander in Chief of the Confederacy....There is no interest or institution in the country worth mentioning now except the army. The government of the Confederacy, is the government of the army, and no citizen has any rights which can interfere with or impede its efficiency.³

¹ Ashe, History of North Carolina, II, 635; Beth Crabtree, North Carolina Governors, p. 95.

² The major difference centered on the question of states' rights. While the old Democratic party had fought violently for states' rights the new Confederate party was willing to forego states' rights if they interfered with the Confederate States of America.

³ North Carolina Standard, July 24, 1863, J. G. De Roulhac Hamilton, "North Carolina Courts and the Confederacy," North Carolina Historical Review, IV (October, 1927), 375-376.

Henry Clark, being a former Democrat and secessionist, was a member of this party. While Clark, as a member of the Confederate party, held the highest office in the state, he took no active leadership in the party.

The Confederate party and Clark did agree on at least one subject and this was the role of criticism during wartime. Clark felt criticism during wartime was unpatriotic. The Confederate party, of course, wanted no criticism and blind obedience to the government. Clark felt that politics was out of place in times of emergency such as war and that the common goal of victory should be searched for by all. The opposition party, the newly formed Conservative party, had definite ideas concerning this. The Conservatives led by W. W. Holden and William Graham opposed the Confederate party due to a long list of grievances.⁴ It was the feud between these two political parties which caused much of Clark's displeasure toward the governorship and was to finally remove him from office.

The Conservatives naturally wanted one of their own party members in the executive chair. With the death of Governor Ellis and the succession of Henry Clark, the conservatives had an opportunity to ask that a new governor be selected. The Conservatives now insisted that the office be

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The grievances included (1) exclusion of anti-secessionists from high jobs and army promotions, (2) harboring suspicions against those who gave up the Union with some reluctance, (3) more rigid enforcement of the Conscription Act in North Carolina, (4) violation of individual rights, (5) appointment of outsiders to command state troops, (6) failure to protect the state from invasion. Zebulon Vance to Jefferson Davis, February 9, 1864, The Governor Papers of Zebulon Vance, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

declared vacant and a successor chosen.⁵ Until this time the Confederates had tried to ignore the Conservatives but now realized the political strength of this party. The Confederates asked the people to maintain the present officers in power so as to "quell partisan strife" during wartime.⁶ Governor Clark's term as senator from Edgecombe expired on the first Thursday in August, 1862. Since he was governor only because he was speaker to the senate, many felt he would no longer be governor legally once his term as senator was terminated. This question caused some concern in the state and was expressed mainly by letters to the editors of the newspapers throughout the state.⁷ In order to play down this problem and to satisfy the Conservatives, the Secession Convention, which acted in lieu of the state legislature until May, 1862, ordered that an election be held and that the new governor should assume the duties of his office in September, 1862, instead of the regular time in January, 1863.⁸ The Confederates hoped by compromising with the Conservatives to pacify them and other opposition.

The real problem, and the one causing the most concern, was the fact expressed best in the Raleigh Register, which stated:

⁵ State Journal, February 12, 1862; Richard E. Yates, "Zebulon B. Vance as War Governor of North Carolina, 1862-1865" Journal of Southern History, III (February, 1937), 46-47.

⁶ Horace W. Raper, "William W. Holden and the Peace Movement in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, XXXI (October, 1954), 496. Hereinafter cited as Raper, "William W. Holden."

⁷ North Carolina Standard, February 8, 1862.

⁸ Raper, "William W. Holden", 496.

These events, we hope and presume, will call the attention of the convention to that anomaly in our state constitution which contemplates and, in fact, provides that in a certain contingency there may be a combination of the executive and legislative powers that the speaker of the senate shall be at one and the same time, Governor of the state.⁹

This paper stated that this was the real problem and the only solution was to have the constitution amended so that a Lieutenant-Governor could be elected. This idea of concentration of power in the hands of one individual was not an idle worry. The General Assembly met on the fifteenth of August, 1862, and the Speaker of the Senate, Henry Toole Clark, opened the session of the senate with a declaration that as speaker of the senate he was also discharging the functions of governor, "but that he was still speaker,"¹⁰ and he continued to act in both capacities. The affairs of the governor kept Clark busy and in less than a month his successor took office as governor.

With the coming of the gubernatorial election in the summer of 1862, the Confederate party faced many disadvantages. The eastern one-third of the state had been invaded and occupied by Federal forces. The military disasters of Roanoke Island, Fort Hatteras, Fort Macon, and New Bern created dissatisfaction in the state. Many lives had been lost in the battles to the North, especially during the Peninsula campaign of May and June, 1862. The first conscription act, passed in April, 1862, began to take full effect in the summer of 1862. The Confederate leaders had promised a short war to the people of the state and it was becoming

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Raleigh Register, November 6, 1861.

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Ashe, History of North Carolina II, 65.

obvious that this would not be the case. As is always true when things do not go as they should, the people blamed the party in power.

Nominating conventions were not held in the state. Newspapers, however, supported their favorites. The Raleigh State Journal, leading Confederate paper in the state, introduced William Johnston to the people of the state. Johnston, president of the Charlotte-Columbia Railroad, was an original secessionist and administration supporter. Johnston also held the rank of colonel in the Confederate Army.

The question now arises why Clark was not nominated for governor by the Confederate party. There are many possible explanations for this. Being a Democrat and original secessionist, Clark was totally unacceptable to the Conservative party in the state. Why then would the Confederate party desert a man that had already served as governor for a year and turn to a political unknown? The most logical explanation was that the Confederate leaders hoped that by not having Clark run, the people would forget the military disasters, conscription, and other major problems. The party seemed to want to use Clark as a scapegoat for their own unpopularity. The Conservatives viewed this as an admission of guilt for their leading paper the North Carolina Standard asked the question, "Why has his own party not endorsed Clark?"¹¹ While this might have been the reason for Clark's not being nominated, there is evidence that the real reason for Clark not running for a full term as governor was that he did not desire nor want to serve a full term.¹² Being tired of criticism

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North Carolina Standard, June 23, 1862.

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Beth G. Crabtree, North Carolina Governors, p. 95.

and seeing constant conflicts between the various political factions in North Carolina caused Clark not to seek a full term as governor of North Carolina.

The Conservatives tried to persuade William Graham to run on their ticket, but Graham refused to run for office.¹³ Holden, as leader of the party, turned to Zebulon Vance, who was an old line Union Whig and when nominated was serving as a Colonel with the twenty-sixth regiment of North Carolina troops. Vance possessed a fine military record. Holden felt it would be better politically if Vance were nominated by the editor of the Fayetteville Observer, Edward Joseph Hale.

Neither Vance nor Johnston campaigned, leaving this task to the press. The Confederate press pictured Vance as the yankee candidate and Holden's man. The Confederates felt a victory for the Conservatives would mean North Carolina had succumbed to Unionism.¹⁴ Conservatives answered that Johnston had earned his military title in the Commissary General's Department while he was on the state payroll as a member of the Secession Convention.¹⁵ The Conservatives also used the list of grievances which had caused the formation of the Conservative party in the first place.¹⁶

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North Carolina Standard, May 14, 1862.

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The Conference position can best be summed up by a paragraph which appeared on the ticket. This paragraph said in part: "An unremitting prosecution of the war; the war to the last extremity; complete independence; eternal separation from the North; no abridgement of Southern territory; no alteration of Southern boundaries; no compromise with enemies, traitors, or tories. Jefferson Davis, Our Army, and the South." J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina (1914, p. 41).

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North Carolina Standard, June 7, 21, 1862.

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See footnote 4, p. 71.

Election day results saw Vance Elected governor by a large margin. The Conservatives also won control of the state legislature. While he was not a member of the legislature, W. W. Holden, exercised a vast amount of control over it. As a reward for his role in the election, Holden was named State Printer.

In early September, 1862, Zebulon Vance assumed the reins of government and became a capable wartime governor of North Carolina in spite of the fact that he was quite often at odds with the Confederate administration at Richmond. The Conservative party in the fall of 1862 began a political purge in order to place Conservatives in all positions of authority and power.¹⁷

Henry T. Clark retired to Hilma, his plantation located just outside Tarboro.¹⁸ Here in July, 1863, Clark was nearly captured by a raiding party of Federal Cavalry under the command of Brigadier General Edward E. Potter. The general, who was Chief of Staff for Foster, was leading a sizable cavalry force from New Bern for a raid on the towns of Rocky Mount, Tarboro, and Greenville. The main purpose of this raid was the destruction of a railroad bridge at Rocky Mount.¹⁹ Upon nearing

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Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. 46.

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Hilma, Clark's plantation, is now located inside the city limits of Tarboro. Clark derived the name for his plantation by taking the first letter of his children's names--Haywood, Irwin, Laura, Maria, and Arabella. Mrs. William J. Gordan, Spray, North Carolina, April 16, 1963, to Garry C. Mercer.

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Official Records, Series I, Part 2, XXVII, 859-860. A Military Report made by General Potter as Chief of Staff for General Foster, Commander of Union Troops in eastern North Carolina.

Tarboro, the Federal forces passed the home of Clark. The ex-governor was standing on the porch preparing for his daily ride when spotted by the Federal troops. Springing to his horse, Clark escaped in a wooded area located nearby. The Federal troops proceeded to plunder his home. What could not be used was destroyed, much being dumped into a creek near the house.²⁰

At the close of hostilities former Governor Clark was again elected to represent Edgecombe County in the state senate in 1866, under Johnson's reconstruction government.²¹ This was the last public position Clark attained. Henry Toole Clark died on April 14, 1874. He was buried beside his mother and father in the Calvary Episcopal Graveyard in Tarboro.

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Ibid.

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Clark wanted to obtain his pardon before assuming his duties as senator. He first applied for a pardon on July 17, 1865. Governor W. W. Holden took no action on several pardon requests including Clark's. It was only after several letters and personal visits by friends on his behalf that on June 10, 1867, the pardon was granted to Clark. Henry Toole Clark, Application for Pardon, North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Henry Clark assumed the governorship when he was fifty-three years old. A man of limited experience and ability Clark did possess an irreproachable character. Clark enjoyed the co-operation of the people throughout the state during most of his term. By the time conflicts became commonplace, Clark had turned the state government over to his successor, Zebulon B. Vance.

The year 1861-1862 found North Carolina in the process of mobilization for the war effort. The Clark administration placed a number of troops on the battlefields of the Confederacy. These North Carolina troops were the best equipped and clothed troops in the Confederate Army. North Carolina was the only southern state to supply completely its own troops throughout the war. This success was due primarily to the activities of Governor Clark and his aides. Henry Clark, never rising above the status of state politician, was selfish in his apparent attempt to supply only North Carolina troops. The responsibility of the chief executive, as Clark saw it, was to provide for your home state first and others second.

While gathering the necessary supplies to equip the troops, Clark touched early all areas of the state's industry. When all conventional means to acquire materials were exhausted, contracts were drawn to purchase supplies in Europe. North Carolina was the first Confederate state to send agents to Europe for this purpose. Clark also placed

embargoes on important items necessary during wartime. While many of these actions were selfish, Clark deserves much of the credit for producing the outstanding North Carolina troops who fought in the War Between the States.

Relations between Clark and the central government at Richmond were for the most part cordial. Clark aided the Confederate government in most things it asked and tried to be fair to all parties. With the aid of Clark, the Richmond government placed the first permanent Confederate military prison at Salisbury, North Carolina. When the Confederate government did not supply prisoners with proper clothing and food during the early stages of the war, Clark took the initiative and did so.

The governor of a state is usually regarded as the leader of his political party, but this was not the case with Clark. At the role of political leader, Clark was a failure. He was not by nature an efficient political leader. As governor, Clark tried to remain aloof from politics; he never accepted the role of leader of any political party. Perhaps this lack of leadership aided Clark in the early stages of 1861-1862. The people of the state needed a man respected and trusted by all factions and parties in this time of great emergency. Clark had gained this trust, but by 1862 the major political parties in the state wanted a change. Both sides wanted a forceful leader and Clark did not measure up to this qualification.

In the actual prosecution of the military aspects of the war, Clark's responsibility was limited by the fact that the command of all state

troops had been transferred to the Confederate States of America. This transfer was for the purpose of centralizing the armed forces of the South and thereby strengthening the Confederacy. Clark did communicate with the officials in Richmond offering advice and suggestions in regard to the military affairs of North Carolina. While most of the actual authority over the North Carolina troops resided in Richmond, Clark aided as well as he could.

All things considered, it must be concluded that Clark was not an outstanding governor. He possessed neither the necessary qualities of political leadership nor the desire to be governor. The demand of the state for more forceful leadership combined with his own lack of political ambition resulted in Clark's retirement from political life after only one year in the executive chair.

Governor Clark's strongest points were a strong character and a willingness to work. Hard work and a good name were important to Henry Clark. Throughout his life, Clark tried to maintain name and character above all else. Clark achieved this for inspite of his mediocre record as governor he gained and held the respect of both governmental officials and the people of North Carolina. Appropriately the tombstone over Governor Clark's grave carries the inscription: "A good name is better than precious ointment."¹

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Inscription on tombstone, Calvary Episcopal Graveyard, Tarboro, North Carolina

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