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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society* is a publication of the New Bern Historical Society Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization whose mission is to celebrate and promote New Bern and its heritage through events and education.

Prospective authors should contact the New Bern Historical Society at 252-638-8558 or by email, adminoffice@newbernhistorical.org, for article guidelines and submission requirements.

Individuals seeking detailed source and reference information regarding current *Journal* articles or copies of prior articles can access www.newbernhistorical.org and then select menu/Journals/repository.

Observations from the Crow's Nest

The New Bern Historical Society salutes the noble efforts of Richard (Woolie) McEnally who resurrected the *Journal* and steered it back into navigable waters as its Editor for the past five years. Woolie has turned over the helm of the *Journal* to a new crew and we will endeavor to keep it sailing smartly in the channel. With our sailing orders set, the 2020 issue of the *Journal* continues to strive to bring new historical insights of New Bern's past. It kicks off with an 'undiscovered gem' in our 20th century New



Bern heritage by Carol Becton about a tenacious business woman who made an impact on women of color in eastern North Carolina. Next, Bob Ainsley takes us back to the turbulent year of 1774 when North Carolina and the other colonies were upset with King George III and his government for the harsh treatment of its colonies. Delegates from around the NC colony assembled and deliberated for three hot days in August as the 1st NC Provincial Congress where they issued a set of resolutions we will call "The New Bern Resolves" and selected three delegates to the 1st Continental Congress.

Claudia Houston, the Society's Historian, unveils the medical challenges and conditions of a hospital to treat smallpox victims of the former slaves who sought refuge in New Bern during the Civil War. Her research uncovers the 'contraband smallpox hospital' in the general area of James City but we need your help pinpointing the exact location of this hospital. The Society's Curator, Jim Hodges, shares a fascinating series of photographs of life in James City from 1900-1915. Any information of the people or places depicted in these photos would be greatly appreciated. During the past two centuries, New Bern has been a busy port for trade and commerce requiring the stationing of revenue cutters by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Woolie McEnally entertains us

with the history of these cutters that concludes with a fascinating connection to the last Coast Guard vessel stationed in New Bern.

Lastly, we spotlight two business enterprises in our recent past starting with a first-person account by Mildred Green of the Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company that will bring fond memories to many New Bernians. The last article by the new Editor highlights the World War II operations of the fourteen wooden warships built by the men and women working at the Barbour Boat Works that had existed on the site of the current NC History Center.

We hope that you will enjoy these snapshots of our New Bern history. As always, we welcome your comments and also any articles about another undiscovered chapter of our history!

Jay DeLoach

Editor

AN UNDISCOVERED GEM IN THE NEW BERN TREASURE CHEST

Carol Vivian Bonner Becton

As a native New Bernian, I love learning about the town's rich history. It is like living in a treasure chest filled with precious gems, each with its own uniqueness. I discovered one of those gems, Mary Fisher Harris DeVane. I can remember hearing her name as a child, but it was not until recently that I discovered how much she contributed to the Negro community. She wore many hats. She owned and operated a beauty school, beauty salons, a taxi service, a brokerage for sleep-in maids in New York, and a midwifery. The sparkle of this gem that caught my eye was her steadfast perseverance in the pursuit of these endeavors.

Today, women continue to encounter obstacles, like the glass ceiling, as they strive to advance in their careers. Mary Fisher Harris DeVane faced far more barriers than a glass ceiling. As a young Negro woman in the early 20th century, she was subjected to segregation, Jim Crow laws, and suppression of certain constitutional rights. With her fearlessness, intelligence, and tenacity, she achieved her goals and succeeded in being a productive and stalwart member of not only the Negro community, but also the greater New Bern community. She worked for the betterment of her community and New Bern in general. I'm honored and humbled to share this rare gem with you, Mary Fisher Harris DeVane.

According to the records from the Craven County Register of Deeds and the 1920 United States Federal Census, Mary Fisher Harris DeVane was born on May 12, 1912 in New Bern, to Jerry and Mary Fisher. She was the oldest of ten children. Her parents made a home for their family on South Front Street in what was called the Long Wharf community. They lived above MM Weeks, a white-owned grocery store. Mary and her siblings attended St. Joseph

Catholic School and West Street Graded School. After graduating from school in 1929, Mary taught in a one-room school in the Harlowe area of Craven County. Due to the lack of public transportation and the condition of the roads, she often stayed in that area teaching for months at the time before returning to her home in New Bern.

Mary married John Henry Harris of New Bern on January 22, 1929, at the Craven County Court House by the Justice of the Peace, P. E. Barrington, as recorded in Craven County Register of Deeds. They had a son, John Henry Fisher, Jr. born on March 17, 1929, but he died a year later from acute bronchitis. He was buried in the historic Timothy Chapel Cemetery on April 1, 1930, in the Brice's Creek community. The body was entrusted to the services of the Merritt Whitley and Sons Funeral Parlor on Bern Street. Mary and John had another son in 1932 named Charles. They all lived at 16 Forbes Alley along with John's mother Sarah, a widow, and a cousin Susan D. Hill (Craven County Register of Deeds and 1940 U.S. Federal Census).

John Harris was employed as a porter at the Neuse Service Station in New Bern. Mary and her husband started the Harris Taxi Service located on Forbes Alley (Charleston, SC: Baldwin Directory Company Inc., 1937, p. 118). The Harris Taxi Service boasted a fleet of five cabs. According to Mary's younger sister, Ms. Helen Fisher Dunson, the names of some of the drivers included: Donald Lewis, Nathaniel Brown, Robert Harris, John Harris, and, most unusual for the time, a woman, Mary Fisher Harris. One of her most favorite and prominent clients was Miss Charlotte Rhone, a Negro registered nurse and the first Negro social worker in Craven County who Mary would taxi around and throughout Craven County (Becton, Carol Vivian Bonner, "Charlotte Rhone and The Rhone Sisters," *New Bern Historical Society Journal*, Volume XXV, No. 1, 2018, pp. 58-64).

On November 16, 1941, tragedy struck the Fisher family. Mary's father Jerry Heidleburg Fisher was employed by the Neuse Veneer and Box Co., located in the Union Point area on the New Bern waterfront. Her father worked for many years as a fireman tending the company's boiler before a malfunction occurred where the escaping steam scalded him to death. Ms. Dunson, who continues to live in New Bern, explained to the author that, "the tragic incident



Mary Fisher Harris standing next to a Harris Taxi Service cab, circa 1940's

was so severe that he, a Negro, was taken to St. Luke Hospital, which did not routinely admit or serve Negroes during the Jim Crow era, but it was to no avail. He died of his injuries. The company hung a picture of him in the building as a memorial to his service and tragic death.”

With the loss of her husband and his income, Mary's mother, now a widow, had to take care of the remaining children still at home. Mary and her adult siblings banded together to help their mother. Mary also looked for other ways and opportunities to support not only her own growing family but also to help her mother and her younger siblings.

Starks Beauty College in Raleigh offered that opportunity. Mary attended this school during the early 1940's and became a licensed cosmetologist. She then opened Eatholia Beauty Shop, also known as the Harris Beauty Shoppe, in her home on Forbes Alley as cited in *Miller's 1947-1948 New Bern, N.C. City Directory*. Before moving into a storefront at 1003 Queen Street in the late 1940's. According to the *City Directory* entry, she is listed as owner of Harris Beauty Shoppe. By 1949, Mary had opened another shop at 833 Pasteur Street. Mary inspired and encouraged other Negro women to increase their income and elevate their standing in the community. As she opened more shops, she offered them opportunities to manage and operate those shops. An article in *The Carolinian* newspaper published in Raleigh listed an advertisement for the Eatholia Beauty Salon for “specializing in tinting, dyeing and marcel waving” (Advertisement, *The Carolinian*, Raleigh, NC, June 18, 1949, pg. 10). Mary assigned Miss Mary E. Lewis as manager of Eatholia Beauty Shop in 1954.

**Mary Fisher Harris
stylishly posing for her
Eatholia Beauty Shop at 1003
Queen Street in 1948.**



MRS. MARY E. HARRIS

Eatholia Beauty Shop

SCALP TREATMENTS - Apex & Posners System

1003 QUEEN ST. • • • PHONE 2088

Five Points

New Bern, N. C.

Mary's fearlessness was demonstrated when she served as a "broker" for domestic sleep-in workers. Many Negroes had left the area and continued to leave New Bern looking for better jobs in order to support their families. Mary helped local Negro women in New Bern and surrounding areas secure "sleep-in maid" jobs in New York City and out on Long Island, New York. Mary made

the initial contacts with the families in New York who advertised in local papers for sleep-in maids. She made all the arrangements, and she personally drove the Negro women to the homes of the families in New York who were seeking domestic help.

Transportation for Negroes during segregation was not easy due to Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, in fact, it was also very aggravating and dangerous. From my personal conversations with Ms. Dunson, she conveyed the challenges encountered by Mary and her Negro employees traveling north and south during Jim Crow laws and segregation. Ms. Dunson recounted that, "Mary would tell the ladies to bring bagged meals and lunches for the ride to New York." She firmly let them know they would not be making many

stops, if any, due to Jim Crow laws where Negroes could not use any of the restrooms in white facilities along the way. Ms. Dunson further emphasized that Mary was very emphatic about not stopping in Wilmington, Delaware, an area where there was always the probability that the police would stop and harass traveling Negroes.

Unfortunately, her home life had its own set of challenges. Mary's marriage to John Harris ended in divorce in the early '50's. Later, Mary married Herman DeVane of New Bern on April 16, 1953, and together they resided at 417 Forbes Alley (North Carolina Marriage Records, 1741-2011).

Due to Mary's outstanding skills and reputation as a cosmetologist, her businesses prospered and afforded her the opportunity to create another business enterprise. The new "Madame Mary Harris DeVane" (Madame is a title used by many Negro cosmetologists in honor of the first, successful Negro female hair product millionaire, Madame C. J. Walker) opened up a beauty school named E(Eastern) and M(Mutual) Beauty College in New Bern (E&M Beauty College Advertisement, *Carteret County News-Times*, January 20, 1953, Section 1, page 3). The first location was 517 George Street (corner of George and Queen Streets) in the Historic Dryborough community.

After a few years, Negro women were coming to attend the school from neighboring cities such as Havelock, Richlands, Jacksonville, Trenton, Pollocksville, Washington, Arapahoe, Seven Springs, Williamston, and Cash Conners. Mary moved the E&M Beauty College from the corners of George and Queen Streets around the corner to 705 Bern Street. The building is still standing at the printing of this article and currently is a private dwelling. Many women graduated from this beauty college. Most of the graduations were held in local neighborhood churches. Mary also organized events in the community for beautician and cosmetology organizations. She provided scholarships and helped where needed in the community ("Queen Street Seniors Win Honors at Commencement," *Carteret County News-Times*, June 3, 1955, Section 1, p.8). E&M Beauty College held annual balls during which queens were crowned based on their service and talent ("She's a Queen," *The Carolinian*, October 1954, p.6).



Eastern & Mutual Beauty College at 705 Bern Street. Mary Fisher Harris DeVane (front row, far left) is pictured with the graduating class of 1955.

Mary was a vital member of the Negro community in New Bern helping to make it a success. News articles were published citing the accomplishments of Mary Fisher Harris DeVane. One news article depicted her representing the North Carolina State President of the State Temple as a proxy at the annual convention of the Daughters of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks held in Chicago, Illinois in 1960. She was cited as “one of the most enthusiastic persons there” (“Mrs. DeVane Had A Role in Elks Meeting,” *The Carolina Times*, Durham, NC, September 10, 1960, p. 3). At the convention, Mary was given “the distinct pleasure of serving as the Hostess for a Banquet which was given in honor of the Grand Temple” (*The Carolina Times*, p. 3).

About two months after being recognized for her outstanding leadership at the annual Elks convention in Chicago, Mary became ill. On November 5, 1960, at the young age of 49 years, Mary Fisher Harris DeVane died in Good Shepherd Negro Hospital of pneumonia, as a result of influenza and bronchitis. She was laid to rest in the Timothy Chapel Cemetery on Perrytown Loop Road in the Brice's Creek community. (North Carolina Death Certificates, 1909-1976)

As Mary excelled in business and community, it is noted that in addition to her other achievements, she served as a midwife in New Bern and surrounding Craven county. She was a lady of many contributions! Mary was not only helping others by providing jobs in her beauty shop, she was tenacious in helping others make a better living as well. Although her life was short-lived, Mary left behind a rich legacy that had a positive impact and became a notable inspiration to many young Negro girls and women in eastern North Carolina. Mary Fisher Harris DeVane is an undiscovered gem in the 'New Bern Treasure Chest'!

About the Author: Carol Bonner Becton is a native New Bernian, educated in the New Bern public schools, and attended NC Central University at Durham and East Carolina University in Greenville. She is the widow of the late James E. Becton former City of New Bern Police Captain and professional photographer. Carol is a minister, and serves on various organizations and boards including the New Bern Historical Society. She loves sharing local history.



THE NEW BERN RESOLVES

J. Robert Ainsley

On August 25, 1774, the 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress, composed of seventy-one elected delegates representing 30 of 36 counties and 6 of 9 boroughs in North Carolina met in defiance of the Royal government. Delegates met at the Craven County Courthouse located then at the current intersection of Middle Street and Broad Street. Members deliberated for three days concerning grievances against numerous egregious acts imposed by the British parliament. The delegates emerged on the 27th of August with resolutions (The New Bern Resolves) to present to King George III. Additionally, they elected William Hooper (New Hanover County), Joseph Hewes (Edenton) and Richard Caswell (Chatham County) as North Carolina's representatives to the 1st Continental Congress. Those representatives met from September 5 to October 26, 1774, at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Saunders, W.L. "Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina." The Colonial Records of North Carolina, Vol. IX, p. 1047).

Historical Marker on Broad Street adjacent to the Craven County Courthouse. The actual site where the First NC Provincial Congress met was in the first County Courthouse that sat in a turnaround that existed in the crossroads of Middle Street and Broad Street. The first County Courthouse burned down during the Civil War.

(Department of NC Natural & Cultural Resources picture)



The 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress launched the erosion of Royal authority in this colony. That authority migrated to an extralegal local authority managed by various Committees of Correspondence and eventually Committees of Safety. The main thrusts of the follow-on North Carolina Provincial Congresses were:

- endorsed the Continental Association¹–2nd NC Provincial Congress in New Bern;
- organized for war – 3rd North Carolina Provincial Congress at Hillsborough;
- declared independence from Britain and the King – 4th North Carolina Provincial Congress at Halifax;
- developed the first North Carolina Constitution with an accompanying Bill of Rights and the establishment of a North Carolina judicial system – 5th North Carolina Provincial Congress at Halifax.



Commemorative coin of the First NC Provincial Congress produced for the Bicentennial in 1974.

¹ The Continental Association, often known as the “Association”, was a system created by the 1st Continental Congress in 1774 for implementing a trade boycott with Great Britain. Congress hoped that by imposing economic sanctions, they would pressure Great Britain into redressing the grievances of the colonies and repeal the Intolerable Acts passed by the British Parliament. The Association aimed to alter Britain’s policies towards the colonies without severing allegiance.

Thomas Hawley
 Whitell
 Joseph James
 Elias Loring
 Joseph Reding
 John Simpson
 Edward Salted
 McIlkenna
 Joseph Shipley
 Sam^r Young
 David Jenkins
 John Williams
 Jos^r Spruill
 Ansh
 Edwards
 Joseph Edwards
 Francis Grayson
 W. Brown
 John Greay
 Edward Anthonick
 Jeremiah Frazer

Partial list of signatures of attendees of the sessions of the 1st NC Provincial Congress in August 1774 in New Bern at the old Craven County Courthouse.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Carolina_Provincial_Congress

The evolution of events during this time frame moved the thoughts of North Carolinians from “restoring their rights as Englishmen” to “governing themselves as independent Americans” (Powell, W.S. North Carolina through Four Centuries. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989, p. 172).

Prelude to Revolution

The British Parliament and Royal Crown imposed a series of taxes through legislative acts from 1764 through 1774 to pay for the heavy debts England incurred in prosecuting the French and Indian War (known in Britain as “The Seven Years War” although it actually lasted nine years). The taxes also supported a large presence of British troops in the lands acquired from the French after the war

and obligations made to various Indian tribes (Watson, p. 61). Notable and very unpopular tax acts included the 1764 Sugar Act, the 1765 Stamp Act, the 1765 Quartering Act, the 1767 Townshend Acts (... which led to the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770), and the 1773 Tea Act (...which led to the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773).

The Stamp Act of 1765 was perhaps a catalyst for the start of collective resistance against the Royal government throughout the province and the impetus for moving the capital of North Carolina from Brunswick to New Bern in 1770. The Stamp Act was designed

by Parliament to cover the cost of “defending, protecting, and securing” the colonies (Powell, p.163). This had been a long-standing practice in England and very little resistance from the colonies was anticipated. However, since the act did not become effective until seven months after its passing which provided time for the colonists to form resistance to its implementation. The act required that all products and documents using paper be printed on special “stamped” paper that was taxed, produced and managed in England. (The stamp was printed on the side of one of the margins.) This would include a variety of legal papers, bills of lading, licenses, bonds, deeds, mortgages, playing cards, newspapers, and other paper documents. Such a tax had an impact on everyone and organized opposition included constitutional legality, mob action, and the development of economic sanctions in the form of nonimportation agreements.

Public demonstrations occurred throughout the province and the most violent protests occurred in the Lower Cape Fear area. The Wilmington Sons of Liberty performed effigy hangings with toasts of “Liberty, Property, and No Stamp Act” and forced the stamp agent to resign. Consequently, the stamped paper aboard the HMS Diligence was not brought ashore and returned to England aboard the HMS Hazard. Hence, the leadership in the Wilmington area had been successful in preventing the implementation of the Stamp Act in North Carolina. The strong resistance against the Stamp Act by the residents of the Cape Fear area; the warm and enthusiastic reception provided by the New Bern citizens to Governor William Tryon in 1764; and a most graphic diatribe by James Davis in the North Carolina Gazette from Wilmington about the poor standards of living in the Cape Fear area convinced Governor Tryon to move the provincial capital to New Bern (Watson, Allan D. *A History of New Bern and Craven County*. New Bern: Tryon Palace Commission, 1987, p. 62-64).

The Boston Port Act of 1774 was the first of five Coercive Acts, popularly known as the Intolerable Acts, that was a direct punitive response of the British Parliament and Royal Crown for the loss of revenue and taxes resulting from the 1773 Boston Tea Party. The act shut down Boston harbor to all trade until restitution was made to the Royal Crown for the loss of taxes and loss of profits to the East India

Company. Consequently, the Boston inhabitants endured numerous hardships. For example, the lack of hay and feed resulted in the deaths of horses and livestock. This led to a strong reaction throughout the colonies and beyond Massachusetts. Other colonies felt that if the British Parliament could do this to Massachusetts, then it would surely do it to other colonies as well. A call for a congress (later referred to as the Continental Congress to discern it from congresses held throughout the provinces) of the colonies was issued to deliberate a course of action in response to such an act. This call to congress was considered a treasonous act against the Royal Crown. An immediate call via the colonial Committees of Correspondence (later became the Committees of Safety) system permeated throughout the American colonies to hold a Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to develop a response to King George III concerning grievances against Parliament with regard to the Boston Port Act and other Intolerable Acts.

The first response for a congress in North Carolina was orchestrated by Josiah Quincy, Jr. (an emissary from Massachusetts) and Cornelius Harnett (a prominent leader from the Cape Fear area who Josiah Quincy, Jr. referred to as “The Samuel Adams of the South”). The ensuing public meeting occurred on July 21, 1774, in Wilmington, NC. William Hooper (a well-respected local lawyer) presided over a mass meeting of Cape Fear counties that determined it to be “highly expedient” for a Provincial Congress to be held without the Royal Governor (at the time...Josiah Martin) in attendance. One of the key reasons for conducting an assembly of this nature without the authority of the Royal Governor was to avoid the practice of proroguing assemblies by the Royal Governor. In essence, if colonial Royal governors did not like the agenda or outcome of an assembly, they would not call for an assembly or would simply call for an end to the assembly in session or “prorogue the assembly at their pleasure”; thus, effectively putting a stop to any unwanted outcomes (Wood, G.S. *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969, p. 316). Therefore, North Carolinians called and conducted their own conventions or congresses in order to draft and send their grievances against the actions of Parliament to King George III.

Thirty counties and four towns held elections immediately and seventy-one delegates attended the 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress held in New Bern at the Craven County Courthouse during August 25-27, 1774. This was the first Congress conducted in the American colonies against the authority of the Royal Crown. The location of this congress had originally been assigned for the Johnston County Courthouse at the Wilmington public meeting, but some quick, quiet, behind-the-scenes maneuvering by New Bern leadership helped move the location to New Bern (Dill, A.T. Governor Tryon and his Palace. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955, p. 171). John Harvey of Perquimans County was elected moderator of the Provincial Congress.

While the delegates were cautious to show allegiance to the Royal Crown, they made it explicitly known that they wanted the same rights attributed to all Englishmen under the British Constitution. “No taxation without representation” was their main rallying point. Major resolutions were made that:

- denounced laws that persecuted Massachusetts;
- avowed colonists’ rights as Englishmen;
- endorsed the proposal for a Continental Congress electing William Hooper, Joseph Hewes and Richard Caswell as delegates;
- no imports of any East India Company or British manufacturers’ goods after January 1, 1775, unless the laws were rescinded;
- no exports of tobacco, pitch, tar, turpentine or any other article to Great Britain unless American grievances were redressed before October 1, 1775;
- no commerce with anyone who does not abide by the results of the 1st Continental Congress;
- adopted the principle of voting by counties and towns to resolve differences (5 delegates each);
- no outside purchase or importation of slaves in North Carolina after November 1, 1775; and

- established county Committees of Safety to execute and monitor adherence to the resolves (Saunders, pp. 1041-1049).

The focus of these resolutions was on economic grounds with the intent of trying to force Parliament to rescind unfavorable laws using economic sanctions as leverage even though it meant extreme hardship within the colonies.

Implications for the Revolution

The events leading up to the historical 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress resulted in outcomes that can be referred to as the New Bern Resolves. These resolves helped shape public sentiment throughout the provinces and direction consequent to The Shot Heard Around the World which eventually led to the:

- **Edenton Tea Party** conducted by fifty-one ladies in Edenton on October 25, 1774. Led by Mrs. Penelope Barker (wife of Thomas Barker, North Carolina's agent in London), the ladies of Edenton solemnly pledged their support of the American cause and vowed not to drink English tea nor buy British goods (Powell, p. 169).
- **Mecklenburg Resolves** of May, 20, 1775 fundamentally found the "Authority of the King & Parliament null & void...and the Continental Congress as the Authority" in the American colonies. William Kennon and Benjamin Patten were attendees of the 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress and instrumental in the writing of the Mecklenburg Resolves.
- **New Bern Association** of May 31, 1775 ordered "A Call to Arms" and a "Pledge Allegiance to the Cause". This document was written by Richard Cogdell and other members of the New Bern and Craven County Committee of Safety in direct response to the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. The New Bern Association was strictly enforced and citizens were often made to sign their allegiance or be branded as "inimical to the cause" by the New Bern Committee of Safety (Hayes Collection (# 324).

Proceedings of the Committee for the Town of Newbern, and County of Craven, May 31, 1775. Southern Historical Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, pp. 1-2).

- **Halifax Resolves** of April 12, 1776 prescribed a “Call for Independence for North Carolina and All of the American Colonies” and eventually,
- **Declaration of Independence**, July 4, 1776.

Significance of the 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress

Royal authority had started to erode throughout the colonies prior to the 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress due in large measure to the ineffectiveness and malfeasance of the Royal Governors. While “no taxation without representation” became the rallying cry of American colonists, the lack of adequate specie and the irregular conduct of courts² were both very close concerns of the colonists. Governors refused to take measures to assure good commerce and the conduct of legal matters in periodic court sessions. Eighteenth-century colonists in America saw themselves as British citizens and were very careful in making this known as well as stating and demonstrating support for King George III. They would often convene conventions whenever Royal authority would not permit a call for an assembly or would prorogue³ an assembly in session to address any grievances the citizenry might have and want to put before the King. They did so since they saw it as a right and their duty under the British constitution as British citizens.

² The conduct of a commercial livelihood was made extremely difficult by the lack of gold and silver coinage. Colonists traded using commodities (i.e., tobacco, pork and salt) that were subject to severe devaluation shifts. The issuance of certain licenses (e.g., marriage) and the settlement of legal claims went unsettled for years since court sessions were not conducted for extended periods of time.

³ Provincial Royal Governors would often practice the “prorogation” of an assembly in the event that they might disagree with a certain outcome that was evident from the discourse in the assembly. They had the power to refuse calling an assembly if they were convinced the outcome of that assembly was to be contrary to the established policies of the Royal Crown and Parliament. Governor Martin of North Carolina refused to call an assembly in 1774 because he knew the assembly wanted to meet in order to appoint NC representatives to the 1st Continental Congress that met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania during September-October 1774. This was the catalyst for the 1st North Carolina Provincial Congress during August 25-27, 1774.

While it was a recognized privilege of all British citizens to meet collectively for the purpose of addressing grievances, they realized, however, that such a convention did not hold the legal luster of an assembly called by the Royal authority under the British constitution. An attempt by the Massachusetts Whigs in 1768 to conduct a successful convention outside Royal authority was a complete lackluster failure. It was convened and conducted, but nothing of significance resulted (Wood, p. 312). The combination of taxation acts from London and the erosion of Royal authority in the colonies in the early 1770's changed all this as colonial citizens became more determined to have their voices heard in addressing their grievances. In lieu of formal Royal assemblies, local Committees of Correspondence started to assume governmental duties in the towns and counties throughout the colonies as paralegal institutions of self-government. As the citizens of North Carolina lost confidence in the Royal government structure they learned they could govern their own affairs without the help from the British Parliament and Royal Crown and moved their thinking from "restoring rights as Englishmen" to "independence as Americans" and formed the most elaborate provisional government structure of all the colonies.

About the Author: Dr. Bob Ainsley is a member of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, New Bern Chapter and the Order of First Families of North Carolina. His 6th Generation Great Uncle Joseph Spruill II represented Tyrrell County at the First NC Provincial Congress and his 5th Generation Great Grandfather Peter Wynne represented Tyrrell County at the Third and Fifth NC Provincial Congresses.



THE CONTRABAND SMALLPOX HOSPITAL OF NEW BERN

Claudia Houston

Little information is available regarding the New Bern Smallpox Contraband Hospital, but it appears to have been established by January 1864 during the midst of the Civil War. Some records exist in the National Archives and Freedmen's Bureau that help to explain the designation and history of this hospital.

The story of how the term "contraband" came to be used to describe runaway slaves is an interesting one. After the firing upon Fort Sumter, South Carolina by Confederate troops on April 12, 1861, three slaves from Virginia, Shepard Mallory, Frank Baker and James Townsend, were taken by their master to Norfolk, where they assisted in building an artillery battery for the Confederacy. They learned they were to be sent to North Carolina to work at another site, causing them to be separated from their families. They took a small boat and rowed to Fort Monroe, Virginia, one of the only Union controlled outposts in the South, and were brought to General Benjamin Butler, commander of Union forces. Butler refused to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 which provided that captured runaway slaves be returned to their masters, because he reasoned that he would be returning these men to build fortifications against his own army. Citing military law that governed war, he seized the three runaway slaves as "contraband." While this defined the slaves as property, it prevented them from being returned to their owners and allowed them to remain under Union protection. The result of this decision was momentous as by the end of the Civil War half a million slaves sought freedom behind Union lines and were eventually emancipated. (Willis, Eric. *The Forgotten: The Contraband of America and the Road to Freedom*. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2017, p.2).

During 1862, General Ambrose Burnside led a Union expe-

dition to eastern North Carolina. His forces captured Roanoke Island on February 8, 1862. By March 14, 1862, the Union Army defeated Confederate forces at the Battle of New Bern that led to Union occupation of the town for the duration of the war. Most white Southerners fled the city prior to the attack, leaving the poor whites and free Blacks behind. News of the battle and occupation spread quickly among the slave population, and they began arriving from nearby towns and plantations as well as from great distances desperately trying to reach the safety of the Union forces. In New Bern, General Burnside was responsible for poor whites that were now destitute by war as well as an ever-increasing influx of slaves. In response to this growing problem, Burnside appointed Vincent Colyer as Superintendent of the Poor for the federally occupied area of North Carolina effective March 30, 1862. Burnside had known Colyer from his work with the contrabands on Roanoke Island.

Colyer began his tenure as Superintendent by taking a census. He determined there were 10,000 contrabands in the surrounding area, 7,500 who were in New Bern. Each slave registered their name and was given food and a place to sleep. Burnside informed Colyer that he was expected to employ up to 5,000 men to help build local fortifications. They were to be paid \$8 monthly along with one ration a day and sufficient clothing. As the war progressed, slaves arrived daily, sometimes alone but often with families. Most had nothing except the clothes on their back and many were hungry and sick, having trekked through swamps, woods and outlying areas to reach New Bern (Mobley, Joe A. *James City, A Black Community in North Carolina 1863-1900*. Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981, p. 5).

Shortly after the Union occupation of New Bern, contagious diseases spread among the contrabands. In 1862, John A. Hedrick, a U.S. Treasury official, wrote, "Smallpox is quite prevalent in Newbern (sic), especially among the refugees." George W. Harris, an ex-slave later recalled that in New Bern, "de smallpox and yaller fever caught us dere and killed us by the hundreds" (Silkenat, David. *Driven from Home: North Carolina's Civil War Refugee Crisis*. University of Georgia Press, 2016, p. 89).

The Black servant of one of the officers of the 3rd NY Heavy Artillery had smallpox and was sent to Colyer for help. Colyer could not find a doctor to care for the man and fearing the spread of the disease, contacted several of the Army surgeons for assistance. Dr. Clark, of Worcester, Massachusetts, had a supply of smallpox vaccine and agreed to inoculate all the contrabands and refugees in New Bern. Colyer then found an old Black woman who agreed to nurse the man with smallpox. He was sent to a hut on the outskirts of town where she tended to him. This case prompted Colyer to ask General Burnside to authorize a hospital for contrabands. Burnside gave his consent and Dr. Clark was ordered to take charge of it. Colyer later indicated that approximately one hundred contrabands were treated in this general hospital (Colyer, Vincent. *Report of the Services Rendered by the Freed People to the United States Army in North Carolina in the Spring of 1860, After the Battle of New Bern*. New York, 1864, p. 20).

When smallpox broke out in 1862, military and federal officials followed health protocols to stop the spread of the virus among soldiers. At any outbreak, military authorities responded by placing infected soldiers in “pest houses” to isolate the virus. Their soldiers were then inoculated. Both armies were impacted and more soldiers died of diseases than they did from battle (Downs, Jim, *Sick from Freedom: African American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War*. Oxford University Press, 2015, Footnote 13). Despite this knowledge, officials, military personnel, city residents and newspapers blamed the virus on the arrival of contrabands in the area. Many Union officials claimed that smallpox “originated among the Negroes” but medical authorities knew that the outbreak resulted from the Union Army forcing former slaves to live in unsanitary camps. (Smallpox is a highly contagious virus that is airborne. It can spread by either inhaling the air of an infected person, or be transmitted by contact with the contaminated bedding or clothing of an infected person.) Overcrowded conditions and unsanitary living quarters exacerbated the spread of smallpox.

Colyer initiated many reforms in his work with the contrabands, but he battled with the provisional governor of the state, Edward Stanly, over educational initiatives he had put into place. He became disillusioned and left New Bern with General Burnside in the

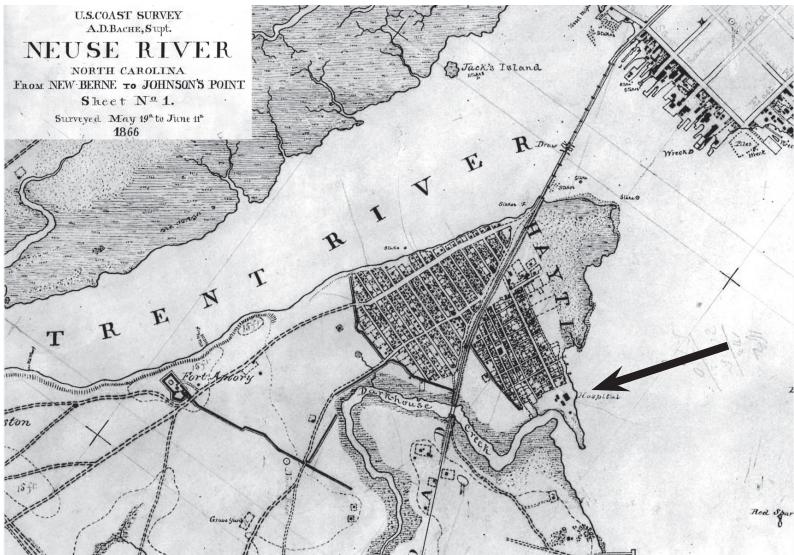
fall of 1862 after having been Superintendent of the Poor for only four months. Major John Foster succeeded Burnside, and he appointed Army Chaplain James Means to the position of Superintendent of the Poor. Soon thereafter, Reverend Means died of yellow fever, and Foster appointed Reverend Horace James, a chaplain in the 25th Massachusetts Regiment, as the first officer specifically appointed Superintendent of Negro Affairs in North Carolina (Mobley, p.15, 21).

In order to provide destitute contrabands and whites in eastern North Carolina safe refuge, Horace James, in the spring of 1863, established a settlement, about 1½ miles south of New Bern at the confluence of the Trent and Neuse Rivers. The camp became known as the Trent River Settlement or the Trent River Camp and was one of three contraband camps that were established in the New Bern area. They were merged into one camp at the Trent River Settlement after Confederate General George Pickett and his command tried to retake New Bern in February 1864. The Trent River Settlement originally encompassed three hundred acres and included eight hundred houses (Mobley, p.18).

In December 1863, Elizabeth James, a cousin of Reverend James, reported that, “the small pox (sic) is prevailing to an alarming extent in Newbern (sic). The clothes they have on must of course be burned, and other clothing given them when they emerge from the hospital.” That same month, Reverend James’ wife, Helen, concurred with her assessments about the threat of disease and noted that “small pox (sic) prevails among black refugees to a fearful extent and is increasing.” Although efforts were made to vaccinate contrabands in New Bern, the measures were ineffective and more than two hundred were in quarantine. In order to stop the spread of the disease, “all the clothing and bedding of these patients are destroyed and in most instances their houses torn down and burned” (Silkenat, p. 89).

The Contraband Smallpox Hospital was in use early in 1864. In March 1864, Abigail May of the New England Sanitary Commission was consulted to provide supplies for the smallpox hospital in New Bern. The U.S. Sanitary Commission was a civilian organization authorized by the federal government to provide sanitary and medical assistance to Union volunteer forces during the Civil War, and along with other duties, they distributed supplies

to area hospitals including the smallpox and contraband hospitals. (*United States Sanitary Commission records: Department of North Carolina Archives 1862-1865*, New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives-Overview). Reverend James also wrote in his 1864 report that, “Of the three great scourges of mankind, famine, pestilence and war, this District has suffered severely from two this past year. During the winter, smallpox raged fearfully...and proved more fatal to the blacks.... In February, full fifty per week died of smallpox. The smallpox was not arrested until the hospital for its treatment had been removed across the River Neuse, and the patients separated from all possible intercourse with their friends.” (James, Horace. *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Negro Affairs in North Carolina 1864 with an Appendix containing the History and Management of the Freedmen in this Department up to June 1, 1865*. Boston, W.F. Brown & Co., Printers, No. 15, Cornhill, p. 16)



Section of 1866 Map Showing James City (Labeled HAYTI).

Southeast of James City on a peninsula is collection of buildings labeled Hospital. Is this the location of the Contraband Smallpox Hospital?

Source, U.S. Survey Map T-1031

Little information is readily available about the location and operation of the New Bern Smallpox Contraband Hospital. Angela Walton-Raji, a genealogist, discovered a ledger in the National Archives that contained several pages of names of men and women who had been designated as “contract nurses” during the Civil War. She listed the names of several hospitals, one of which was the “Contraband Smallpox Hospital, New Berne, North Carolina.” It contained a list of 44 names of contract nurses who worked at this hospital. Little is known about them except for their names reported below. (Walton-Raji, Angela Y. *Remembering Black Nurses in the Civil War*, United States Colored Troop (USCT) Chronicle Blog post, July 11, 2012; and *The Contraband Small Pox Hospital of New Bern, North Carolina*, USCT Blog post, July 17, 2012).

Bennett, Esther	Jones, Minerva	Ruffind, Edward
Bennett, Margaret	Jones, Scott	Russell, Gracy
Biddle, Philip	Kinsley, Jane	Simmons, Joseph
Brimayer, James	Latham, Juda	Singleton, Joseph
Carter, Dinah	Lewis, Frank	Swindle, Levantar
Chance, Mary	Lindsay, Celia	Taylor, Creasy
Chapman, Eliza	Lindsay, Joshua	Thomas, Mary
Cobb, Wright	Mabry, Frank	Turner, Thomas
Donnell, Sarah	Mabry, Isaac	Washington, Ella
Faber, Lora	Mellinder, Sarah	Wesson, George
Grimes, Susan	Moore, Henry	White, Nelly
Harris, Samuel	Overton, Lucy	Wilder, Charity
Howard, Dolly	Pool, Alfred	Wilson, Clarissa
Ircott, Matthew	Pool, Martha	Wilson, Simon
Johnson, Zachary	Ralls, David	

Contract nurses primarily came from the contraband community. Newly arrived fugitive slaves were a source of labor and helped to transition ex-slaves to paid workers. After arriving sick and exhausted from escaping their owners, many contrabands were nursed back to health by others who shared the same experiences. Some were hired as nurses after their recovery by the surgeon-in-charge. Civil War historians tend to distinguish between contract and volunteer nurses. Contract nurses are defined as lower-class women who are employed by specific individuals, usually the surgeon in charge of the hospital, rather than a large organization like the War Department. Contract nurses are many times paid off book (Methany, Hannah. *For a Woman*:

The Fight for Pensions for Civil War Nurses. Undergraduate Honor Theses: Paper 573, College of William and Mary, 2013, p. 63-64).

The National Archives holds the pension applications of 2,448 Civil War nurses. The Army Nurses Pension Act was signed into law by President Benjamin Harrison on August 5, 1892; it provided all women, who served as nurses in the Union Army during the Civil War, with a pension of \$12 per month. They had to have served at least six months and been hired by someone authorized by the War Department to hire nurses (Methany, p. 2).

While any pension information for many of the men and women listed above could not be located, information regarding several of the men was found in military records. The nine men listed below have muster cards that say, “*Muster and Pay Roll of colored contract nurses employed at Contraband USA Hospital, New Berne, N.C.*” All were listed as hospital attendants and were paid \$10 per month.

Biddle, Philip – Contract signed Feb 1, 1864 and annulled April 15, 1864.

Cobb, Wright – Contract signed Feb 1, 1864. Last entry June 30-July 31, 1864, \$10 owed to him.

Lewis, Frank – Contract signed Feb 1, 1864 and annulled April 15, 1864.

Ralls, David – He was employed by the Contraband Hospital starting in March 1864, but the hospital name was changed to the Freedmen’s Hospital. Contract signed January 1, 1865, and his muster card indicates Freedmen’s Hospital, New Bern. His contract was annulled March 10, 1865.

Simmons, Joseph – Contract signed Feb 1, 1864 and annulled April 14, 1864.

Singleton, Joseph – Contract signed March 1, 1864 and annulled April 15, 1864.

Turner, Thomas – Contract signed Jan 1, 1864. Last entry was January, 1865.

Wesson, George - Contract signed Feb 1, 1864 and annulled on April 15, 1864.

Wilson Simon - Contract signed Feb 1, 1864 and annulled on April 15, 1864.

From these records it appears that the Contraband Smallpox Hospital may have opened in January 1864 because contract nurses were hired during this month. They could have been hired in preparation for the hospital opening but it is not clear if this is the case. (These muster cards were all found under *Miscellaneous records for the United States Colored Troops*, Fold 3 Military digitized records).

The *Morning Reports of Contraband Hospitals and Camps* in the Freedmen's Bureau Records for New Bern also support that the Contraband Smallpox Hospital opened sometime in January 1864. Dr. J. Fleming filed a Morning Report each day starting on December 20th, 1863, and ending on February 6, 1866. No names were given, only numbers. At the top of the Report was written *Morning Report of Contraband Hospitals and Camps, District, North Carolina. From December 20, 1863—January 16, 1864.* The camps and hospitals listed in the reports were City Hospital, North Camp, Small Pox Camp, Kimball's Camp, and Fort Totten.

On January 17, 1864, the designation was changed from Smallpox Camp to Smallpox Hospital lending credence that the New Bern Contraband Smallpox Hospital opened on this date. On February 21, 1864, Fort Totten was no longer included in the reports and on March 13, 1864, there was no longer a designation for North Camp. By March 16, 1864, only the City Hospital, Smallpox Hospital and Kimball's Camp were included for statistical purposes. In April 1864, the statistical report included City Hospital, Smallpox Hospital and Contraband Camp. On May 15, 1864 the designation of Contraband Camp was changed to Contraband Hospital, and on May 19, 1864 the designation of Contraband Hospital was changed to Trent Hospital. From June 25-July 11, 1864, the Smallpox Hospital was not included in the statistics and there was no explanation for this exclusion. Smallpox Hospital information again was not included from September 4-December 6, 1864. The last statistical

entries for this hospital were from December 7, 1864-December 20, 1864. There is no mention of the Smallpox Hospital for the rest of 1864, 1865 and through the last entry in February of 1866.

There was a significant change in 1865 while smallpox was still raging. The federal government assumed legal responsibility for the freedmen by creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, now known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Its mission was to ensure that Blacks and refugees received immediate and temporary medical care until civil authorities could take over that responsibility. While this was well meaning, most of the care provided was in the form of food, clothing and shelter. Little medical care was given. (Pearson, Reggie L. *There are Many Sick and Feeble and Suffering Freedmen: The Freedmen's Bureau Health-Care Activities During Reconstruction in North Carolina, 1865-1868*. North Carolina Historical Review, Vol. 79, No 2., 2002, p. 141-142). The Freedmen's Bureau took over remaining hospitals in 1865. The Smallpox Hospital designation was changed to Freedmen's Hospital in January 1865 as noted on the muster cards from David Ralls. By March 1868, all of North Carolina's freedmen's hospitals (except the one in Beaufort) had either been closed or converted into dispensaries.

The New Bern Contraband Smallpox Hospital was a short-lived chapter in the long struggle of contrabands and freed people to receive proper medical care. For some who served as contract nurses, it allowed them to transition from slaves to self-supporting people. The number of contrabands, who fled to Union-occupied New Bern, coupled with the smallpox epidemic, created the need for a specific hospital where patients could be quarantined and cared for to halt the spread of this deadly disease.

Gaps in details and questions remain. The site of the hospital was on the Neuse River, but the exact location is unknown. Names of the contract nurses who worked there are recorded, but little of their history has been found. Research is an ongoing process and perhaps new efforts will uncover details that will answer these questions.

About the Author: Claudia Houston loves history, genealogy, writing and and research and utilizes all those skills as a Board

Member and Historian for the New Bern Historical Society, writing monthly stories for New Bern Magazine, articles for the NBHS Journal and co-managing the NBHS Facebook Page. She holds a degree in History from the State University College at New Paltz, NY and a Master of Public Administration Degree from PACE University.



JAMES CITY IMAGES

Jim Hodges, NBHS Curator

In 2014, a portfolio of twenty 5" x 7" black & white photographs were identified in the Historical Society collection. They had not been formally catalogued and accession number NB.2014.188.1-20 was assigned. The only identification clue was "James City" written in ink on the back of each of the images. None were signed indicating that the photographer or photographers were unknown. Further investigation revealed that at least one of the images had been converted to a postcard by M.E. Whitehurst & Co. in New Bern circa 1910. The names of the individuals in the photographs are unknown and the exact locations (other than the man in the oxcart crossing the old George Street Trent River Bridge) are unknown. The estimated time span for these images is 1900-1915 and most probably in the James City area of Craven County. The photographic content of these images is exceptionally powerful and certainly demonstrates the difficult journey experienced by the James City African-American Community.







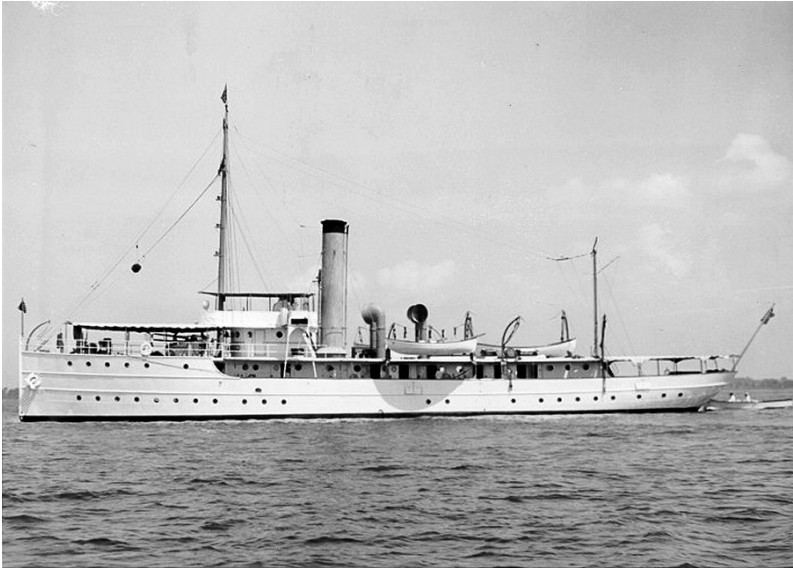




THE REVENUE CUTTER *PAMLICO* AND OTHER NEW BERN-BASED REVENUE CUTTERS

Richard McEnally

A tribute to the importance of New Bern as a seaport is that, almost from the beginning of this country, United States Revenue Cutters have been based at this city. The primary focus of this article, the last of these cutters, the U. S. Revenue Cutter *Pamlico*—later U. S. Coast Guard Cutter *Pamlico*—was a fixture on the New Bern waterfront for nearly forty years, 1907 through most of 1946.



Pre-World War I photograph of USRC Pamlico

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, navalsource.org/archives/12/179890.htm, date and photographer unknown

In the early years of this country, customs duties on imported goods were the primary source of revenue for the new Republic. The first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, appreciated that a strong collection mechanism was necessary in order to collect these revenues. Accordingly, Congress created the Revenue-Marine under the U.S. Department of the Treasury in 1790 based on a recommendation from Hamilton. After July 1894, the Revenue-Marine was officially renamed the Revenue Cutter Service (“United States Revenue Cutter Service.” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Revenue_Cutter_Service).

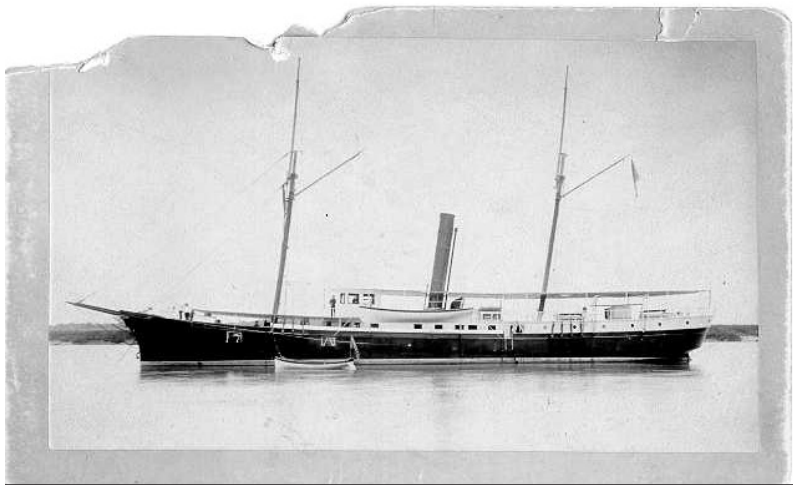
The legislation authorizing the Revenue-Marine also provided for the construction of ten revenue cutters. These were intended to be small, fast, maneuverable, shallow-draft vessels capable of intercepting commercial shipping. One of these was the *Diligence*. It was built at Washington, North Carolina under the supervision of William Cooke, its first commanding officer (appointed by George Washington during his southern tour in 1791). Dates regarding its commissioning are uncertain, as are its dimensions. One thousand dollars was allocated for the construction of these revenue cutters, and they were allowed a crew of eight men and two boys. After entering service in the summer of 1792, the *Diligence* was based out of New Bern where it remained until October, when it was reassigned to the Port of Wilmington, North Carolina. It was sold out of the Revenue Service in 1798 (Wikipedia reference for USRC *Diligence*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USRC_Diligence; “Explore New Bern’s Historical Markers,” New Bern Historical Society website, <https://newbernhistorical.org/historical-markers/>).

A historical marker commemorating the *Diligence* stands at the foot of the Alfred C. Cunningham Bridge, which spans the Trent River in New Bern.

Another notable early revenue cutter based in New Bern was the *Mercury*. It was built in 1807 and initially home ported at Ocracoke, but by 1809 it was transferred to New Bern. The *Mercury*’s major claim to fame was that, during the War of 1812, it alerted New Bern city officials to a surprise attack launched on July 12, 1813 by a large British force. This warning gave city officials time to muster

forces to defend the city, whereupon the British abandoned their invasion. The *Mercury* saw further activity in the War of 1812, and after the war remained in the Revenue Cutter Service until 1820 (Thiesen, William H. “The Long Blue Line, Cutter *Mercury* and the War of 1812,” posted on the official blog of the U.S. Coast Guard, October 12, 2017). A historical marker honoring the wartime service of the *Mercury* was erected in Ocracoke in 2013, and a model of it is in the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras, North Carolina.

The next revenue cutter stationed in New Bern and was the immediate predecessor of the *Pamlico* was the *George S. Boutwell*. *Boutwell*'s principal dimensions and other characteristics, along with those of the *Pamlico*, appear in the accompanying tabulation. She was built specifically for service on the southeastern coast of the United States, and named for George S. Boutwell. Boutwell (1818–1905) had a long career in public service, including service as a congressman, the first Commissioner of Internal Revenue, and the 28th Secretary of the Treasury from March 1869 to March 1873. (*Boutwell (George S.)*, 1873, Archives of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, undated)



Early photograph of USRC George S. Boutwell before it was painted white

Source: Donald Canny, U S Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters, 1790 – 1935, Naval Institute Press, 1995, date and photographer unknown

As seen in the accompanying photograph, the *Boutwell* was a handsome vessel, and also interesting from a naval architecture standpoint. It was built during the transitional period from sail to steam. With its topsail schooner rig (it could set sails both above and below the gaffs that slant upward from the masts), it could make decent progress under sail alone, although not as effectively as a pure sailing vessel with a larger sail area. Moreover, it was fitted with unusual steam engine machinery with two cylinders that could be operated independently or together as a compound engine. (Archives of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office)

Throughout the first fifteen years of her service, the *Boutwell* was based variously out of Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; and Jacksonville, Florida. During the Spanish-American War she came under the control of the United States Navy for several months. (Some sources say from May 20, 1897 to June 1, 1897, but these dates are almost certainly off by one year; the standard dates for the Spanish-American War are April 21, 1898 to August 13, 1898.) In any event, she was then based at New Bern from the fall of 1898 until replaced by the *Pamlico* in 1907 (Archives of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office). *Boutwell* was probably involved in standard activities for revenue cutters in those years, including checking papers of commercial vessels entering and departing the inland ports of central North Carolina; assisting commercial, fishing, and private vessels in distress; enforcing navigation laws; providing security for regattas and similar events; and showing the flag when called upon to do so. But these operations took its toll on the cutter and the 30-year old cutter as described in the 1904 Annual Report:

The *Boutwell* is an old vessel doing duty in the sounds of North Carolina. This vessel can render assistance to commerce plying in the deep-water channels, but cannot leave those waterways owing to its draft of water. A suitable vessel to replace it is much needed. (Revenue Cutter Service, Part of Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of Finances, United States Department of the Treasury for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1904)

Apparently this plea resonated and legislation was approved for a replacement:

An act for the construction of a steam revenue cutter of the first class adapted to service in the waters of Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and the Neuse River, at a cost not to exceed one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. Approved January 12, 1905. (United States Statutes at Large, Volume 33, Part II.)

As this legislation implies, *Pamlico* was the first (and only) Revenue Cutter/Coast Guard Cutter constructed specifically for service in the inland waters of North Carolina. Its builder, the venerable firm of Pusey & Jones, was a prime contractor for the United States government, responsible for more than 500 vessels between its founding in 1848 (some sources give other dates) and demise in 1957. The *Pamlico* was the 326th vessel constructed by Pusey & Jones. It was laid down sometime in 1906, probably in the late winter or spring, launched March 8, 1907, commissioned as the United States Revenue Cutter (USRC) *Pamlico* July 11, 1907, and arrived in New Bern November 4, 1907. While the name Pamlico has many associations with eastern North Carolina, officially the vessel was named after “a member of the Algonquian people formerly of the Pamlico river valley in North Carolina.” (shipbuildinghistory.com/shipyards/large/pusey.htm; U.S. Coast Guard History, *Pamlico*, 1907, undated)

The accompanying tabulation and pictures convey several characteristics of the *Pamlico* that are noteworthy. In no particular order:

- This was a big vessel. At 158 feet in length, it was over half a football field long, considerably longer than even the largest yachts that now visit New Bern.
- While the *Pamlico* was only 20 feet longer than the *Boutwell*, 158 feet long versus 138 feet, its displacement (aka weight, often regarded as a better measure of size than length) was more than double, 455 tons versus 198 tons. Vessel displacement is not a linear function of length; as ships get longer, they get wider (30-foot beam for the *Pamlico* versus 23 feet for the

Boutwell) and higher above the water. The *Pamlico* no doubt had heavier machinery and equipment than the *Boutwell*.

- It was very shallow draft, drawing only 5 feet 6 inches. (By comparison, the *Boutwell* drew 6 feet 9 inches, and scaled up to the length of the *Pamlico* would have drawn 8 feet 8 inches.) This characteristic, of course, was intended to respond to the complaint about the *Boutwell*'s draft, enhancing its utility in eastern North Carolina, where it is said, with some exaggeration, the water "is a mile wide and a foot deep."
- It was no speed demon, with a maximum speed of 9.8 knots (11.3 miles per hour) with a cruising speed of 6.5 knots (7.5 miles per hour). This was probably adequate in an era when most shipping came into the sounds and rivers of eastern North Carolina under sail or via towed barge. At a speed of eight knots it was claimed to have a cruising range of 2000 miles.
- It was steam powered and coal fueled, pretty much the standard for the time. However, even if its single boiler was kept fired at all times, getting up the steam needed to reach maneuvering speed might take an hour or longer, so it could not respond quickly to emergencies. (In contrast, today's diesel power is available almost instantaneously.)
- It could carry 50 tons of coal. Coal as a boiler fuel has many drawbacks: it is bulky, dirty, requires considerable manpower to handle and shovel into boilers, and generates large plumes of dense smoke—the presence of the *Pamlico* must have been evident even when the vessel itself was over the horizon.
- In contrast to the *Boutwell*, it is evident from the pictures that there was no intention that the *Pamlico* proceed under sail; it had no provision for setting sails, and its single mast forward of the bridge was for showing flags, displaying lights, and the like. (Later in life it had a short mast aft, probably to accommodate an aerial for a radio fitted in 1913.)

- The *Pamlico* was constructed of steel, while the *Boutwell* was built of iron. Steel has many virtues as a shipbuilding material and it tends to be less susceptible to rust than iron when immersed in water.
- The *Pamlico* had a substantial crew of 33 officers and men, fewer than the 38 of the *Boutwell*, but still large. This crew must have been a welcome addition to the New Bern economy at a time when the city population was only around 10,000.

Unfortunately, New Bern newspapers from around the period when the *Pamlico* arrived in the city have not survived, making it difficult to gauge local reaction. Initially, and for many years thereafter, it was docked on the Neuse River at the foot of New (formerly Neuse) Street. Surviving pictures suggest that it was later berthed closer to the mouth of the Trent River, possibly at the foot of Broad or Pollock Streets. From any of these places it was conveniently located for communication with the Customs House. The Customs House, based in the Government Building, (now the city hall at the corner of Craven and Pollock Streets) from around the turn of the century until the beginning of World War II, was a substantial operation, with a customs collector, his assistant, and a messenger (Various *City Directories* in the New Bern Historical Society collection).

The *Pamlico*'s actual activities in connection with customs collection were probably limited. Its primary duty (according to the official World War I Coast Guard History) was assisting vessels in distress. Such vessels would have included those involved in commercial shipping, yachts, and the large fleet of commercial fishing boats operating in eastern North Carolina waters at the time. Consistent with this shift in emphasis for the *Pamlico* and other revenue cutters, in 1915 the Revenue Service was merged into the United States Coast Guard, and the *Pamlico* became Coast Guard Cutter 15.

In addition to “her assigned duties of enforcing the customs laws of the country, conduct[ing] search and rescue operations,” the *Pamlico* was to “conduct...winter cruises, patrol regattas and other maritime events, transport federal officials as required, and participate in community activities as ordered.” As just one example of such activities, “from 1910 to 1913, she was used to convey many congressional and press association parties to New

Bern and through the New Inland Canal [as opposed to the historical Dismal Swamp Canal, presumably a reference to what is now called the Albemarle Chesapeake Canal]” (Official History).

With the declaration of war by the United States on April 6, 1917, the *Pamlico* and other Coast Guard vessels and operations were transferred to the Navy Department. For the duration of the war the *Pamlico* was primarily engaged in the training of naval reserve officers on the Chesapeake Bay and in her home waters, and “the enrollment of reserve officers and the enlistment of men for the reserve service.” Following the end of the war, she was returned to the Coast Guard on August 28, 1919, when the entire service was returned to the Treasury Department, and again assigned to New Bern (Official History).

Indications are that during the years between the World Wars the *Pamlico* was fairly inactive. Local memories are that she rarely left her berth, participating primarily in local events and entertaining the citizens and their children. Things changed with the advent of World War II. The Coast Guard was again transferred to the Navy, the *Pamlico* as WPR-57.

Along with 30 other vessels she was used to maintain a patrol of the waterfronts of Morehead City, Elizabeth City, New Bern, and Washington, “and also a continuous patrol of Bogue, Beaufort, Drum and Ocracoke Inlets and The Drain [now Barden Inlet in the Cape Lookout area]. At these inlets all boats entering and leaving were boarded and examined for identification cards, boat licenses, and any other necessary papers” (Official History).

In May of 1944 the *Pamlico* underwent a major overhaul, including repairs to the main engine and boiler, but by this time her hull was in poor shape due to the effects of corrosion. At some point concrete was poured into her bilge to plug holes and control leaks—a common “quick fix” at the time (Official History).

Following the end of the war and the reduced need for patrol vessels, the Coast Guard made the decision to retire the *Pamlico*. As the U.S. Coast Guard Official History notes, “During her 40 years of service in North Carolina waters, she became something of a fixture to the local population. They were disappointed to see her retired and even had their congressman [Graham Barden] call



Here, late in World War II, Pamlico, in war-time gray paint, is used to test a floating drydock.

Source: Archives of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, Photo No. 6-25, May 26, 1944, photographer unknown

the Commandant, Admiral Joseph F. Farley, to see if they could keep her in service for a longer period of time.” But it was to no avail. The *Pamlico* was decommissioned on September 6, 1946, and sold out of the service on July 7, 1947 (Official History).

What was not good enough for the Coast Guard apparently still was of some use to private industry. Somewhere along the line the *Pamlico* was converted to diesel power. She went through several changes of owners, including the Norris Grain Company of New York under the name *C.W. Curlett*. The last known record of her documents her acquisition by the Ailsworth Transport Company of Reedville, Virginia in 1958 and renamed the *William Dea*. Her subsequent fate is unknown (<http://navsource.org/archives/12/179890.htm>).

On April 28, 1990 a plaque commemorating the *Pamlico*'s 40 years of service was erected at the foot of the Cunningham Bridge near the *Defiance* plaque. One of the persons helping in the dedication was Alex Haley, the well-known author of *Roots*, who had served as steward's mate onboard the *Pamlico* from 1940 to 1943. (navsource.org)



Retired Coast Guardsman and author Alex Haley helps dedicate plaque commemorating Pamlico's 40 years of service in North Carolina waters.

Source: Archives of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, undated Photo No. 05-042890-03-14, April 28, 1990, photographer unknown

Acknowledgement: Beth L. Crumley of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office provided invaluable service in retrieving documents concerning the *Pamlico* previously thought lost to posterity.

About the Author: Richard W. McEnally is the Meade Willis Professor of Investment Banking Emeritus at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. He recently received the President's Award from the New Bern Historical Society in recognition of his efforts in restarting the Society's Journal and serving as its Editor for the past five years.



THE STORY OF THE MAOLA MILK & ICE CREAM COMPANY

Mildred Green

On March 27, 1935, Harvey L. Barnes purchased a small ice plant in New Bern, which also sold ice cream, from F. E. Mayo of Washington, N.C. The name of that company was Maola, a name that would become a household word throughout the entire state of North Carolina in years to come. The name “Maola” had an interesting beginning. The original owner, Mayo, owned a Coca-Cola bottling company in Washington, N.C. He combined the “Ma” from Mayo and the “ola” from Coca-Cola, hence the name Maola. He also adopted Coca-Cola red as the company color and the Maola name was written in the same style script as Coca-Cola (“25th Anniversary of Maola.” *Sun Journal*. September 30, 1960).



Harvey L. Barnes
President and Owner
1935-1961

The purchase price was \$43,500 (approximately \$800,000 in 2020 dollars). Barnes paid \$540.00 in cash for the company and assumed a loan for the remainder of the purchase price (*Sun Journal*, September 30, 1960). Mayo knew Barnes to be an honest and successful salesman of soda fountain equipment. When he decided to sell Maola in New Bern he encouraged Barnes to buy the company and had no hesitation in taking Barnes' note. Maola began with just one building, two trucks, five employees and the leadership of Harvey L. Barnes.

One of those five employees was a young and talented sign painter

named Donald L. Paul. Barnes convinced Paul, who was well known in the New Bern area, to join the company. He promised him opportunities for advancement and growth but admitted there would be long hours and hard work ahead. Mr. Paul accepted his offer. He became a key player in the success of the company as well as Vice President of Maola Milk and Ice Cream Co. and a stockholder.

The early years were challenging for the company. A lack of working capital in the first few years was especially problematic. However tough times got, Barnes refused to give up. His outstanding sales abilities, his ability to inspire the small group of employees, and his sheer determination to succeed carried the company through those difficult times. The stories of Barnes and his work ethic lived on long after his death. Initially the company focused on ice cream; all five employees were involved in ice cream processing and packaging, delivering, and maintaining equipment. Their hard work and dedication paid off when at the end of the first year Maola had sold 63,000 gallons of ice cream (*Maola Mirror* [an employee newsletter], July 1975).

In 1936 Barnes began studying the idea of pasteurizing milk at the New Bern facility. He described the obstacles he faced to Gertrude Carraway, a reporter for the *Sun Journal*. In a 1941 interview, Barnes said in February 1937 he was selling milk from the first pasteurization plant ever opened in the four-county area of Craven, Pamlico, Carteret, and Beaufort Counties. This was not an easy task, as many people declared they did not like pasteurized milk. Barnes obtained help from health units and local women's organizations with educational campaigns explaining the value of pasteurization. The milk was pasteurized and packaged in glass bottles. Stories continue of how the Maola delivery driver would stop by their house with fresh Maola milk in glass bottles.

The business grew rapidly. By 1938 it occupied a 30,000 square foot building, had fourteen trucks, and 34 employees. In addition to milk and ice cream, Maola was distributing chocolate milk, table and whipped cream, butter, buttermilk, and Greenspot orange juice. Maola paid local dairies \$45,000 annually for their fresh milk products (*New Bern Tribune*, undated).

John Dixon was one of the early employees of Maola. He became Vice President of Purchasing and a key member of the early management team. He enjoyed sharing stories of those early years under the guidance of Barnes. According to Dixon, one's title might have been Accounting Manager but you would likely find yourself loading trucks and running a sales route most any day. One of the qualities he admired most in Barnes was that he never asked you to do anything that he wouldn't do himself. Barnes instilled a loyalty in people that inspired folks to go beyond their basic job duty. Barnes appreciated those employees who stood by him in those early years. He rewarded them by giving them shares of his own Maola stock.



The Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company at the intersection of North Craven Street and Avenue C near the Neuse River.

Slowly but surely, the hard work and dedication began to pay off as Maola's market share grew. Sales increased from \$40,000 at the end of 1935 to \$1,043,459 in 1945 largely in part to the influx of Marines and their families stationed at the new Marine Corps bases at Cherry Point in Havelock and Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville.

Barnes believed in the company being active in New Bern and the surrounding communities. He was always ready to donate Maola milk and ice cream products for various fundraisers in Maola's market.

The company was always eager to open their doors to the public, especially to schoolchildren. To this day one hears stories from adults who grew up in New Bern and the surrounding counties about their fond memories of visiting Maola on educational tours as children.

An example of his keen sense of marketing was his purchase of a mechanical cow at the World's Fair in the early 50's. "Clementine" could chew her cud, breathe and swish her tail. She was quite a big deal back in the 50's and thereafter as school children in New Bern and Eastern North Carolina came to Maola for a plant tour. She is still bringing smiles to kids of all ages as Clementine is now a resident of the Cow Café in downtown New Bern.

In 1953 Barnes hired Kenneth G. Reeseman, a Cherry Burrell dairy equipment salesman. Barnes was impressed with Reeseman's salesmanship and his management skills. His instincts were correct as Maola sales and markets expanded under his sales leadership. By 1958 the Maola sales territory had grown to include Wilmington, Elizabeth City, Jacksonville, Ahoskie, Williamston, Greenville, Washington, and Ahoskie.

The milk Maola processed was purchased from contracted Maola dairy farmers, farmers who had long-standing relationships exclusively with Maola. Early on the company began to employ a full-time field representative to work with farmers on matters such as animal husbandry, pasturage, equipment maintenance, and milk refrigeration. Farmers who sold milk to Maola would be paid more for their milk, but were required to meet higher quality standards established by the company set (*Sun Journal*, September 30, 1960).

In 1956 Maola was recognized by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare Public Health Service, Washington, D. C. as having the highest sanitary rating of any dairy in the state of North Carolina. This recognition reflected the dedication to quality that was a number one priority at Maola.

Due to the performance of Maola milk producers and the high-quality standards Maola set, the company could boast that Maola milk was better, lasted longer, and tasted fresher than milk from other

dairies. Slogans such as, “Because Fresher Tastes Better” and “Fresher by Leaps and Bounds” were popular Maola in marketing campaigns.

In 1952 Maola established a profit-sharing plan for employees (*Maola Mirror*, July 1975). In 1956 the first Maola Stock Option Plan was announced whereby employees could buy Maola stock. Many Maola employees took advantage of this opportunity. This was a great incentive for employees and another example of Barnes’ wish that employees could be rewarded for contribution to the company’s success.

Maola employees respected Barnes and appreciated him. In 1956 they had a bronze plaque with his likeness made and placed in the entrance of the Maola office headquarters in New Bern. The inscription on the plaque reads: “A tribute to Harvey L. Barnes, Sr., founder of Maola Milk and Ice Cream Co., from his employees. In appreciation of his kindness, human interest, and inspiration as a business leader.”

On August 3, 1956, Barnes announced the promotion of Donald Paul to Vice-President and Kenneth G. Reesman to General Manager of Maola. The death of Barnes in April of 1961 was a major loss to the company. The company continued with a strong management team with his widow, Kathleen Barnes, as President. Mrs. Barnes was actively involved in daily activities of the company. Like her husband she was dedicated to the New Bern community and well known for her generosity.

The 60’s also provided additional opportunities for growth and expansion. In 1963 Maola purchased a small dairy operation in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and thereby expanded their ice cream novelty operation to include Nutty Buddys and ice cream sandwiches. This facility was capable of producing ice cream for special occasions, such as ice cream from molds in the shape of Santas and Christmas trees. Maola was on the “mooove”. In this decade supermarket private labeling provided much growth as Maola became the bottler and manufacturer for Piggly Wiggly, Foodland, Red and White, and the Wilson Supermarket.

“We Own the Dairy...We Do A Better Job” was the motto of Maola and displayed in an advertisement in the local papers

across Maola markets in 1973. It was at this time that Kathleen Barnes, continued her husband's legacy by gifting shares of her own personal stock to those employees with at least 5 years of service via the formation of Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP). Thereby Maola officially became an employee owned company.

The 80's continued to provide more business opportunities as Maola's reputation for quality and service expanded New markets were opened in the Raleigh/Durham area and began serving Food Lion grocery stores and many convenience stores. These stores were rapidly expanding, and as they grew, Maola grew.

In 1993 Maola and President Reesman were indicted for antitrust violations: "executives from five other dairy companies to rig school lunch milk bids so all the companies would derive illicit profits" (Skorneck, Carolyn. "Borden Agrees to Pay Fine to Settle Bid-Rigging Charges." *AP News*, February 12, 1993). After a lengthy and costly legal battle, Maola and Reesman were found not guilty. Maola was vindicated on May 29, 1993 at the federal court in Wilmington, North Carolina (*Sun Journal*, September 1993). This verdict made Maola the only dairy to successfully refute charges stemming from a federal bid rigging investigation. In celebration, Maola Victory Day, May 29th, was declared a new employee holiday.

In the early '90's, a new management team began to emerge at Maola. James Green, a longtime consultant to Maola and the food industry and former manager of several large manufacturing plants across the country, was recruited as Vice President and General Manager. Key members of the new management team included Charlie Parker, a longtime employee as General Sales Manager; Maxwell Mason, Regional Sales Manager; and Mildred Green, Executive Vice President. These new managers, along with many other valuable employees throughout the company, worked together to prepare Maola for the future.

Maola management was beginning to see the emergence of large dairy conglomerates which were fierce competitors with deep pockets. These dairy conglomerates had bought out many independent dairies across the country. It was becoming increasingly difficult for a small regional dairy to compete in the larger marketplace. In order

to be competitive, Maola had to be able to produce dairy products in larger volumes. Jim Green saw the need for a major upgrade of the manufacturing facilities, and with the help of John Baker, Maintenance Operations and Engineering Manager, a massive plant expansion project was implemented in 1994. The project was projected to cost \$20 million in expenditures over a ten-year period (*Sun Journal*, December 10, 1998). In order to support the cost of the plant improvements, Green laid out an aggressive plan to increase sales by more than 25 percent.



Tours of the Operations at the Facility in 1973 by school children from the Calvary Baptist Church School and Maola Branch Managers wearing hard hats.

The improvements were made, the sales plan implemented, and the nineties brought great success to Maola. The company was recog-

nized in 1994 as one of the Top 100 privately held companies in North Carolina and was highlighted in the *Business North Carolina* magazine. The market territory expanded further into Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia and Maola sales increased from under 40 million to almost 75 million dollars annually in 1999 (*Sun Journal*, October 15, 2000).

In 1994 Maola opened the Cow Café in New Bern. Previously Maola had sold ice cream and milk out of a small facility on New Bern's Avenue C. In December of 1994, Maola transformed a small sales room to a unique cow-themed dairy store covered with black and white cow spots and stocked with over 200 cow related gift items. This idea had come about years before when she tested this concept at a North Carolina food show. She asked Darrell Lee, a talented artist, to design a booth with cows eating ice cream and drinking shakes. She named the ice cream "corny cow" names like Moonilla, Udder Pecan and Gooley Cowphoe. As Green served the attendees, she saw the positive reaction to this presentation. Jim and Mildred Green convinced President Reesman and the Cow Café was established at the plant (Cooke, Christine. "Dairy Town." *Our State*, June 2014).

Through the years, ownership of Maola was sought after by various dairy groups and cooperatives. Reesman and his management team wished to keep Maola independent and always declined the overtures. However, as 2002 approached the Maola leadership saw a continuing decline of independent producer dairies. Finally, after many hours of study and soul searching it was determined that it would be in the best interest of Maola and its employees that the company be sold. Maola accepted an offer from Maryland Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative (VMPC) in 2003. Because of the strong Maola name and its reputation for high quality and service, the Maola name survived and became the official brand of the VMPC milk and ice cream products (*Sun Journal*, January 15, 2003).

Following the transaction, Mildred and Jim Green acquired the rights to Cow Café and relocated it in downtown New Bern, where it has operated since 2004 ("Dairy Town").

Maola continued to operate in New Bern until July 27, 2014 when it was announced by Maryland Virginia Milk Producers

Cooperative that the local plant would be closed, and the operations moved to another company owned facility in Newport News, Virginia. While 98 employees would be affected, thirty jobs would remain in New Bern (Fitzgerald, Eddie and Bill Hand. “Maola Moving Away.” *Sun Journal*, May 15, 2014). The New Bern location operated as a dairy product distribution center until 2019. (Hussey, Kate and Jason O. Boyd. “Transformed Maola Milk Plant could mean big business for New Bern.” *ABC New Channel 12*, March 19, 2019. <https://wcti12.com/news/local/transformed-maola-milk-plant-could-mean-big-business-for-new-bern>)

The hometown dairy of New Bern, Maola Milk and Ice Cream Co. will long be remembered for the contributions it made to the New Bern community. Those employees who were part of Maola’s history continue to carry great memories of a special time and a special company.

About the Author: Mildred Green joined Maola Milk & Ice Cream Company in 1969 in an entry level position, progressed up the corporate ladder, and eventually became the Executive Vice President. She retired from Maola after 34 years whereupon she and her husband Jim Green became co-owners of the Cow Café on Middle Street.



THE LASTING IMPACT OF THE BARBOUR BOAT WORKS WARSHIPS OF WORLD WAR II

Jay DeLoach

With Hitler's power-grabbing expansion into neighboring European countries in the late 1930's, the flames of war spread throughout Europe and around the world. It was just a matter of time before the United States would be engulfed in this conflagration. Before being drawn into actual combat as a member of the Allied forces, the United States was providing military aid to several countries, primarily Great Britain. One such military aid program was called the Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 authorizing the distribution of food, oil, materials, and weapons to Allied countries to defend and defeat the Axis powers. The Barbour Boat Works of New Bern became one of several shipyards in the United States contracted by the U.S. Navy to build fourteen naval vessels of which twelve ships were delivered to the British Royal Navy for action in the European theater during World War II. Two of these vessels were kept by the U.S. Navy and saw action in the Pacific theater in our fight against the Japanese. The stories of these New Bern-built ships during World War II and their history afterwards in the ownership of other countries, demonstrated the lasting impact and value of Barbour Boat Works and the people who built them.

The origins and operation of the Barbour Boat Works, Inc. of New Bern (1932-1997) were carefully researched and nicely described in the 2019 *Journal* article by Susie Rivenbark Perry, the great granddaughter of the founder Herbert W. Barbour (Perry, Susie Rivenbark. "Barbour Builds Better Boats." *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society*. Vol. XXVI, No. 1, 2019: p.18-31). As the war was escalating in Europe, the U.S. Navy conducted a site survey of Barbour Boat Works in August 1940 and recommended the boatyard for construction of wooden warships. Barbour Boat Works received several U.S. Navy contract awards, "chiefly through the work" of U.S. Congressman

Graham A. Barden (1935-1961) who represented the region.

With these contracts, the boatyard expanded from one marine railway to three with the largest being able to handle a 1000-ton vessel with a beam of 38 ft and a length of up to 180 feet. The boatyard ramped up to a workforce of 1200 workers with predominantly unskilled labor because most of the skilled labor who had not already enlisted in the Armed Forces had gravitated to the well-paying federal jobs at the new Marine Corps Air Base at Cherry Point. On-the-job training was the order of the day at the shipyard and men and women from the New Bern area quickly produced a variety of rescue and salvage ships, net laying ships, and yard minesweepers for the war effort (Barbour Boat Works exhibit, North Carolina History Center, 2018).

Rescue and Salvage Ships

In June 1941, the British sent plans and specifications to the U.S. Navy requesting a number of rescue and salvage ships to be built under the Lend-Lease Act. The U.S. Navy would eventually build 31 vessels to these specifications using six different shipyards. Six of these 31 vessels were destined for the Royal Navy while the other 25 ships were used by the U.S. Fleet. The hulls of these vessels would be made either of wood (13 ships) or steel (18 ships). Barbour Boat Works was selected to build two of the wooden-hulled vessels for the Royal Navy designated as BARS for British rescue and salvage ships. These *Shipscribe* class vessels were 183 feet long, driven by diesel electric propulsion and two screws, and reached a top speed of 12 knots. The ship was manned by 45 personnel who also served the single 3"/50 caliber dual purpose gun mount and the two twin 20mm anti-aircraft guns. (Class BARS-5: *HMS American Salvor*. <http://shipscribe.com/usnaux/BARS/BARS05.html>).

The two Barbour Boat Works BARS were named the *HMS American Salvor* (BARS-5) and *HMS Boston Salvor* (BARS-6). Their keels were laid down in the spring of 1942 and delivered to the Royal Navy in December 1942 and February 1943, respectively. According to the *Admiralty Salvage in War and Peace 1906-2006* by Tony Booth, the records and reports of the Admiralty Salvage Department are rather scant from 1943-45 due to a lack of staff to



HMS Boston Salvor in New Bern

Rescue and Salvage Ship HMS Boston Salvor (BARS-6) is pictured pier side at Barbour Boat Works awaiting delivery to the British Royal Navy under the Lend-Lease Act. On March 16, 1945, Boston Salvor was later struck and sunk by a V2 rocket in the Antwerp area. (East Carolina University Digital Collection, October 20, 1943)

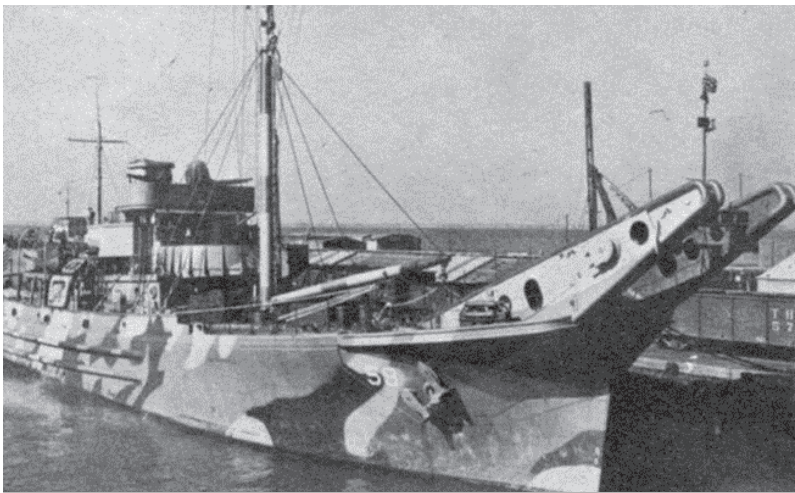
write detailed reports but it appears that these two vessels salvaged and cleared wrecks during and after the invasion of Normandy of June 6, 1945. As the war progressed, Booth also described that, “Many of the ports along the way to Germany were packed with scuttled ships...” and “were also heavily booby-trapped.”

These Barbour-built rescue and salvage ships were involved in clearing many of the scuttled ships to allow passage of our supply ships carrying food and material to our troops and also to the starving people of Belgium and the Netherlands. The *HMS American Salvor* was specifically mentioned in a rescue and salvage mission of the Liberty ship *Alan A. Dale* on Christmas Eve of 1944 when the *Dale* was torpedoed by a German Biber, a one-man midget submarine, in the Scheldt River on the way to Antwerp. The *HMS Boston Salvor* was not so lucky. She was struck and sunk by a V2 rocket in the Antwerp area on March 16, 1945. She would be raised in 1946 and sold for scrap to a Belgium firm. After the war, the *HMS American Salvor* returned to the

United States and was sold in 1946 to Greece to operate as the merchant ship *Aptotos* until 1955 (Class BARS-5: *HMS American Salvor*).

Net Laying Ships

Between late 1941 and early 1942, the U.S. Navy contracted with seven shipyards to build 40 wooden-hulled vessels to become the *Aliathus* class of net laying ships as part of the huge shipbuilding programs for the war effort. The primary function of these specialized ships was to lay and maintain steel anti-torpedo or anti-submarine nets to protect ships at anchor or in harbors. Five of these 40 vessels would be transferred to the British Royal Navy as part of the Lend-Lease Act. In July 1942, the Barbour Boat Works was one of those shipyards contracted by the U.S. Navy to build four of these vessels. All four vessels would be built and delivered to the U.S. Navy from June to December 1944. Two ships, the *USS Abele* (AN-58) and *USS Terebinth* (AN-59), would be retained by the U.S. Navy for service in the Pacific theater while the other two ships, *HMS Precept* (Z-266) and *HMS Precise* (Z-285), would be transferred to the British Royal Navy and see service in the European theater.



Net laying ship USS Terebinth (AN-59) moored pier side during the Pacific campaign. Note the camouflage painting scheme on the hull, also called dazzle camouflage, intended to confuse enemy ships and aircraft. USS Terebinth participated in the Okinawa campaign.

(Glen Paulson collection)

The *Aliathus* class of net laying ships had wooden hulls about 195 feet long and could achieve a top speed of 12 knots with her two Busch-Sulzer BS-539 diesel-electric engines. Her crew consisted of four officers and 52-56 enlisted men who operated the ship and manned the single 3³/₅₀ caliber dual purpose gun mount and four twin 20mm anti-aircraft gun mounts while in combat. The ship sported a large double-prong protrusion from the bow used to lay and retrieve up to 12 tons of nets and buoys.

The keel of the first of four *Aliathus* class vessels was laid down in January 1943 and named after a silver or white poplar tree commonly called the abele. The *USS Abele* was christened by Mrs. G.B. Waters, launched, and placed in commission in August 1943 by Lieutenant Commander Jesse H. Bloodworth, USNR. The ship proceeded to the Pacific theater and performed net laying operations for the Battle of Okinawa in March 1945. She was attacked by Japanese suicide boats and aircraft during the next seven weeks but suffered no damage. *USS Abele* assisted in downing a Japanese aircraft and was later credited with shooting down a

Japanese 'Val' bomber aircraft. For these actions, her commanding officer, Lieutenant John Budnik, USN, was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with the Combat "V" device for valor. After the surrender of Japan, the *USS Abele* would return to the United States where she was decommissioned and sold to the Great Lakes Lumber & Shipping Company in 1947. After several changes in ownership, she was later converted into a tug and then a barge and remained in operation until 2006 (Naval History & Heritage Command, Dictionary



Mrs. H.G. Waters of New Bern prepares to christen the Yard Net Tender (YN-77) with a bottle of champagne. YN-77 would later be commissioned the USS Abele (AN-58) and operate in the Pacific Theater during the war.

(ECU Digital Collection, ID. 758.223, July 15, 1943)

of American Fighting Ships: *USS Abele* (AN-58). <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/a/abele.html>).

The second *Aliathus* class vessel was laid down as the *Balm* (YN-78) in March 1943, launched in August 1943 and christened by Mrs. J.M. Mitchell. The *Balm* was renamed the *USS Terebinth* (AN-59) after a small European Sumac tree that yields Chian turpentine. The ship was commissioned in August 1944 and placed under the command of Lieutenant Sandrup Bernsen, USNR. The *USS Terebinth* journeyed to the Pacific via the Panama Canal and arrived for the start of the Battle of Okinawa on March 26, 1945, and immediately commenced net laying operations. In the early morning of March 28, an unlighted boat approached the *Terebinth* and failed to respond when challenged. The crew opened fire with small arms but the approaching Japanese vessel dropped a depth charge which exploded near the *USS Terebinth*. Luckily, she sustained no damage but it was a close call. At the end of the war, the *USS Terebinth* would return to the United States where she would be decommissioned and sold to the Van Camp Seafood Company in 1946 (Naval History & Heritage Command, Dictionary of American Fighting Ships: *USS Terebinth*. <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/t/terebinth.html>).

The third and fourth *Aliathus* class vessels were destined for the British Royal Navy. The *HMS Precept* (Z-266) and the *HMS Precise* (Z-285) were both laid down in the fall of 1944 and delivered to England at the end of 1944. They would perform their wartime duties in European waters and would be returned to the United States after the surrender of Germany. Both ships would be struck from the Naval Vessel Register and sold. The fate of the *Precept* is unknown. The *Precise* was sold in 1947 and operated as a merchant ship until October 1958 when she floundered at sea during a storm 40 miles off the coast of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua (Barbour Boat Works, New Bern, NC. <http://www.shipbuildinghistory.com/shipyards/small/barbour.htm>).

Yard Minesweepers

By far, the largest number of wooden-hulled vessels built during the war was the yard minesweeper or YMS. At least 35 U.S. shipyards were involved in the construction of 561 yard minesweep-



First British Yard Minesweeper BYMS-29 built by Barbour Boat Works and delivered to the Royal Navy in June 1942. BYMS-29 served as a training ships for new recruits before being assigned minesweeping duties around Denmark. After the war, BYMS-29 was returned to the U.S. and later sold to Greece as a contraband chaser.

(Imperial War Museum collection, HU 1317)

ers. The yard minesweepers were small auxiliary vessels that were intended to operate in and around ports and harbors, but many of these vessels operated extensively in open ocean. Barbour Boat Works was contracted to build eight of these yard minesweepers for the British Royal Navy and they were designated BYMS. They were all basically the same design being 136 feet long with a maximum speed of 15 knots powered by two 880-horsepower General Motors 8-268A diesel engines. She carried a crew of 32 men and armed with one 3⁷/₅₀ caliber dual purpose gun mount, two 20mm anti-aircraft gun mounts, two depth charge projectors, and a suite of minesweeping gear (Navsource Photo Archive: British Motor Minesweepers (BYMS). <http://www.navsource.org/archives/11/19idx.htm>).

The eight Barbour Boat Works BYMSs were built and delivered to the Royal Navy between June 1942 and November 1943. They were not assigned names as the other vessels described above but were given the designation BYMS-29, BYMS-30, and BYMS-37 through BYMS-42. Once in England, they were assigned to the Nore Command in Flotillas 150, 157, 163, and 165. These workhorses

would be instrumental in clearing the mines in the path of the invasion fleet heading to the beaches of Normandy on the early morning of June 6, 1944. The BYMSs in the Nore Command Flotillas 150 and 165 were given the task of sweeping the inshore areas off the D-day landing beaches in Normandy, France, especially the boat lanes between the transport areas and the beaches. These ships operated closer to the D-day beaches than any other warships apart for the landing craft, and the BYMS supported the landing troops with gun fire. The following actions by several of the BYMSs illustrated the immense impact these Barbour-built ships had in the war in Europe:

- BYMS-38 shot down an enemy airplane on October 7, 1943, while operating off the coast of England (Wildfire: BYMS-2038. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2038.html>).



Striking back at the Enemy.

Above is the happy gun crew of the BYMS-38 after shooting down an enemy plane off the coast of England on October 7, 1943. Pictured in the center in the tan overcoat is the gunnery officer, Royal Navy Reserve Lieutenant E. W. Beavers from the coastal town of South Shields, England. (Source: Imperial War Museum Collection)

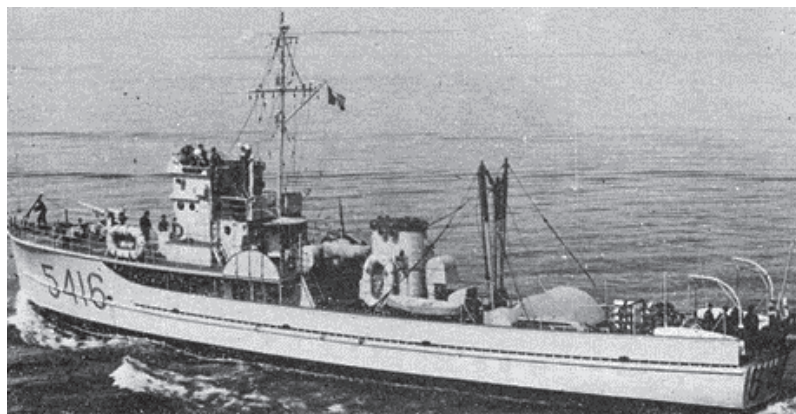
- From May 1944 to May 1945, BYMS-29 was deployed to the Mediterranean and swept mines off the shores of Malta and Italy (Wildfire: BYMS-2029. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2029.html>).

- During the period from the June 5, 1944 (the day before D-day), to the end of July 1944, BYMS-39 and 41 cleared pathways through the minefields off Sword Beach at Normandy, France that provided safe passage of the invasion convoys to the ship assembly and disembarkation areas almost right up to the beaches. These ships continuously swept the seas for newly laid mines by German forces (Wildfire: BYMS-2039. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2039.html>).
- BYMS-30 struck a mine and was sunk on October 8, 1944 while sweeping mines off Le Havre, France. Skipper Lieutenant S. H. Duffield was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (Wildfire: BYMS-2030. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2030.html>).
- From October 27 to November 6, 1944, BYMS-40 helped clear the Scheldt River during the most vital and dangerous minesweeping operation of World War II. Signalman Robert Kay claimed the mines were so numerous they were “like peas”. When the BYMS-40 dropped her towed minesweeping gear into the sea, it detonated a mine creating a gaping hole in her port quarter. She had to return to England for repairs (Wildfire: BYMS-2040. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2040.html>).
- On November 2, 1944, BYMS-41 was part of a minesweeping force that came under heavy fire from the guns at Knokke on the south bank of the Scheldt River estuary. BYMS-41 was hit in the mess deck. Shortly afterwards BYMS-41 embarked with other ships to clear mines in the Scheldt River to open up the port of Antwerp. Thomas Ellis, a signalman serving onboard BYMS-41, was awarded a ‘Mentioned in Dispatches’ for great gallantry and endurance in clearing the estuary of the Scheldt River of mines during this operation (Wildfire: BYMS-2041. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2041.html>).
- The winter of 1944–45 was very harsh for the people of

Netherlands. Food was cut off by the Germans, and 18,000 people starved to death. From May 10 to July 9, 1945, relief came when minesweepers cleared Dutch ports of mines allowing ships carrying humanitarian aid to arrive. Minesweepers such as BYMS-38 and BYMS-41 were the first vessels to arrive in the Dutch ports. The crew gave their food to the starving Dutch children. Skipper G.H. Douse of BYMS-38 was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his efforts in this operation (Wildfire: BYMS-2038. <http://www.wild-fire3.com/byms-2038.html>).

- Although the war in Europe was over, mines still had to be cleared from German harbors and ports. The German people were close to starving and urgently needed humanitarian aid. From July 9 to August 20, 1945, minesweepers such as BYMS-39 arrived to clear the way for urgent humanitarian aid. Skipper J. R. Bowie of BYMS-39 was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions (Wildfire: BYMS-2039. <http://www.wildfire3.com/byms-2039.html>). After the war, many of these minesweepers returned to the United States only to be sold to other countries for further service. BYMS-29 and BYMS-40 were sold to the Greek Customs Directorate in 1948 and became contraband chasers. BYMS-30 and BYMS-42 were sold to Italy in 1947 and became the coastal minesweepers *Orchidea* (DR 406) and *Gladiolo* (DR 417), respectively, until 1966 when they were both struck from the Naval Vessel Register. BYMS-38 was sold to the Netherlands in 1946 and became the minesweeper *Marsdiep* (MV 36). Later, she was reclassified as a diving vessel and then in 1962 was sold to Brazil returning to service as a minesweeper under the name *Siriri*. BYMS-41 was sold to Egypt and renamed the *Darfur*. She was later sold to Algeria in 1962 and renamed the *Sidi Fradj* before being discarded in 1971 (J.J. Colledge and Ben Warlow. *Ships of the Royal Navy*. Casemate Publisher-Greenhill Books, 2010: p. 60-61).

The wooden warships built by the men and women of Barbour Boat Works during World War II made significant contributions to the war effort in the European and Pacific theaters. Some of these ships did not survive the crucible of war while others persevered



From British to Italian Naval Service.

After the war, BYMS-42 was returned to the U.S. and later sold to Italy in November 1947 and named Gladiolo (DR 417), later reclassified M-5416 (pictured above). The vessel was removed from service in 1966. (Source: Robert Hurst, Italian Navy in Jane's Fighting Ships, 1965)

through the hostile fire and minefields to clear a path for others to follow. After the war, numerous vessels continued to serve around the globe for many years in a variety of ways. Overall, these ships delivered when the Nation and our Allies needed them most thus becoming another proud chapter of our New Bern heritage!

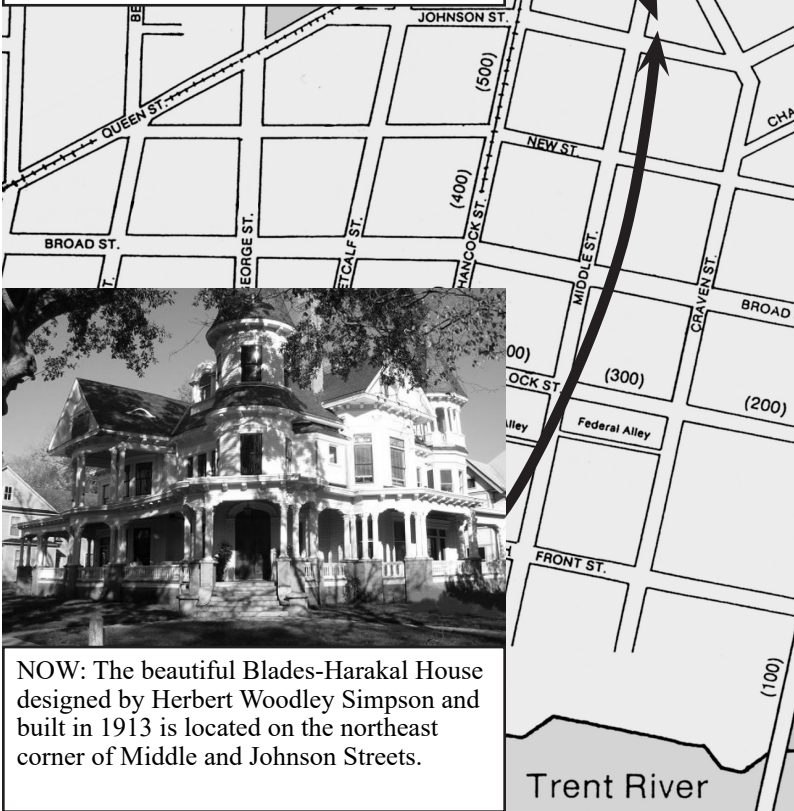
About the Author: Jay DeLoach graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, served in submarines, earned three graduate degrees, and retired from the Navy as a rear admiral. He was the 12th Director of the Naval History & Heritage Command and is a direct descendent of the founder of New Bern, the Baron Christoph de Graffenried.



New Bern Then and Now



THEN: A Union carriage repair and livery during the Civil War occupation. Circa 1864



NOW: The beautiful Blades-Harakal House designed by Herbert Woodley Simpson and built in 1913 is located on the northeast corner of Middle and Johnson Streets.

About the New Bern Historical Society

The New Bern Historical Society has been celebrating New Bern's rich heritage through events and education since 1923 when Minnette Chapman Duffy, Judge Romulus A. Nunn, and other interested New Bernians founded the Society "to preserve for future generations the wealth of historical material found in New Bern." The vision of these New Bernians continues today and is reflected in an active calendar of educational events/programs and social gatherings. The Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, member-supported organization. Our membership has grown to over 1000 with hundreds of volunteers contributing to our projects, programs and events each year. Membership support and tax-deductible donations go toward educational events and programs and stewardship of important historic properties such as:

- Historic Attmore-Oliver House – home to our administrative offices and exhibits
- New Bern Civil War Battlefield Park activities and tours
- Lunch & Learn lectures
- Dr. Richard K. Lore Annual Lecture
- Annual Ghost Walk 3-Day Event
- Heritage Home Tour
- New Bern Historical Society *Journal*
- Quarterly New Bern Historical Society Newsletter
- New Bern Historical Society Website and Facebook page
- Monthly articles in *New Bern Magazine*
- Gingerbread House Contest during the Holiday Season
- Harriet Marks Scholarship
- Over 6000 accessioned historical photos, artifacts and furnishings

We ask you to share our mission with family and friends and encourage them to become active members promoting New Bern and celebrating its rich heritage.

511 Broad Street
New Bern, NC 28560
Phone: 252-638-8558

Remember Old New Bern

The following extracts are observations by W. B. Wadsworth from an article published in the Sun-Journal in December 1951.

- ☞ Do you remember when our harbors were constantly filled with sail and steam boats, carrying and bringing freight and passengers up and down our rivers to Kinston, Trenton, Vanceboro, and other landings?

- ☞ Do you remember when New Bern had two knitting mills, a buggy factory, a shoe factory, three tobacco warehouses, five banks, a candy factory, and several barrooms where a man could get a drink for a dime or a stein of beer for a nickel with lunch thrown in?

- ☞ Do you remember when our streets were paved with oyster shells coming from King Watson's oyster restaurant; a wonderful place to get oysters any way you wanted them and at their best; all you could eat for fifty cents?

- ☞ Do you remember when chicken roosters were 25 cents apiece and hens 15 cents apiece, regardless of size; eggs 8 cents a dozen; smoked country ham 20 cents a pound; shoulder 10 cents; bacon 8 cents? We had strength to work after a good breakfast of that with plenty of good thick biscuits and rice covered with rich, red gravy.