



# JOURNAL

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# JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Jay DeLoach, Editor

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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.

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## Observations from the Crow's Nest

It has been fair weather sailing this past year on the Neuse with only a few easterly squalls to seek safety in our little harbor on the Trent. Our crew has been busy with their quills and inkpots to conjure up an assortment of historical treats for our membership.

Our ever-inquisitive Society's Historian Claudia Houston asked the question if any Blacks fought in the Union Army during the Battle of New Bern in March 1862? A revelation by a fellow historian led to the discovery of William Henry Johnson, and a fascinating story of courage and conviction.



Our ardent Curator Jim Hodges provides another photographic exhibit of yesteryear by a returning Union Army veteran William Garrison Reed who captures on film thirty years later sites of New Bern where he had been stationed during the war years. Reed was also instrumental in the reburial of several fallen comrades in the New Bern National Cemetery as a result of his pilgrimage to New Bern.

Board member Ken McCotter is the sixth great grandson of Revolutionary War Major Isaac Guion. He proudly recounts in his article the many roles in which Isaac Guion performed for our community and our country – merchant, surgeon, commissary, paymaster, delegate, legislator, Master Mason, and a friend of George Washington.

Can you imagine what this area would be like if Gilbert Waters had been able to acquire the financing to mass produce his version of a horseless carriage in 1899? Motor City of the South? Jack Waters regales us with his grandfather's futile attempts to convince local banks to back his business plan to mass produce his 'Buggymobile' that is now on display in the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh.

Renowned journalist Eddie Ellis educates us on a little-known attack and capture of the 52-man Union garrison at Croatan Station earthworks on May 5, 1864 by an overwhelming force of Confederate soldiers. The Union prisoners go on a harrowing journey to Georgia to be imprisoned in the hell-on-earth called Andersonville. Of the fifty-two men captured just south of New Bern, only a handful lived to see the war's end.

Out of the crucible of war springs new beginnings and hope. Native New Bernian Bernard George tells the story of how a prayer group in an old shack near the newly built Fort Totten in 1862 formed the beginnings of Clinton Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion Church, New Bern's second oldest African American church. For more than 160 years, Clinton Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church has stood as a testament to the faith of its founding families and dedicated pastoral leadership.

In August 1920, North Carolina had an opportunity to become the 36th state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment that would give American women the right to vote but resistance to woman suffrage was strong, especially in eastern North Carolina, and the state senate deferred discussion to the following year. Tennessee stepped in to become the deciding vote. Susan Cook's scholarly exposé details the development of the early woman suffrage in New Bern and its connections to the state-wide movement. It also reveals that the level of the opposition was attributed to race and protection of white supremacy.

Lastly, Air Force veteran Steve Shaffer brings us a heart-wrenching story of a young man from New Bern, Joe Stallings, who joined the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and paid the ultimate price in a bombing mission over Italy in the closing days of the war in Europe. It would take three long years after the war before he was finally laid to rest in New Bern.

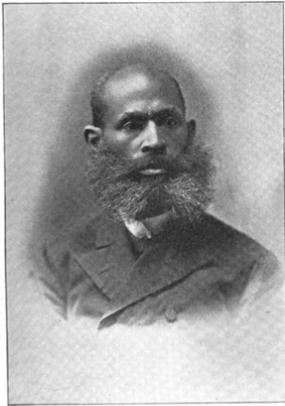
We have a special request for those interested in contributing articles on our New Bern history. In 2023, the New Bern Historical Society is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary! We would be happy to entertain articles on the formation of our Society or key milestones in its 100 years of existence serving our membership in New Bern and Craven County.

Jay DeLoach, Editor

**WILLIAM HENRY JOHNSON  
AND THE  
FORGOTTEN BLACK SOLDIERS  
AT THE BATTLE OF NEW BERN**

**Claudia Houston**

**D**id any Blacks fight for the Union Army at the Battle of New Bern? Not until the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation and the establishment of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) in 1863 were Blacks allowed to officially enlist in the Union Army. The Battle of New Bern took place on March 14, 1862, so it would appear Blacks could not have participated. However, a revelation by a fellow historian led to the discovery of William Henry Johnson, and a fascinating story of courage and conviction that had been unknown or forgotten.



*William Henry Johnson*

[https://hoxsie.org/2013/02/14/the\\_autobiography\\_of\\_william\\_henry\\_johnson/](https://hoxsie.org/2013/02/14/the_autobiography_of_william_henry_johnson/)

Johnson was born March 4, 1833, to free Black parents and raised in Alexandria, VA. He left home at the age of twelve and spent four years in Philadelphia learning the barber trade. However, being a barber was not his destiny and in 1851 Johnson headed to Albany, NY, where he became an associate of Stephen Myers, a supervising agent for the Underground Railroad. Johnson knew and was influenced by many early abolitionists including Frederick Douglass, Henry Highland Garnet, and Garrett Smith. While in Albany, he married Sarah Stewart, whose father also participated in abolitionist activities.

In 1855, the Johnsons relocated to Philadelphia where Johnson continued

his anti-slavery activities. He became a member of the Banneker Literary Institute in 1857. Also, he organized the Proscribed American Council, a secret abolitionist organization whose purpose was to “revolutionize public opinion in Philadelphia” in response to the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act.

Johnson was part of a group known as The Leaders who formed the Frank Johnson Guard, a militia organization associated with the Black members of the Underground Railroad. Many free northern Blacks were denied admission into local White militias because Whites thought that Blacks would not fight. Blacks responded by forming their own military organizations like the Massasoit Guards of Massachusetts, the Attucks Guards of New York State, and the Frank Johnson Guard of Philadelphia.

In 1859, on the eve of a parade by the Guard, John Brown appeared in Philadelphia with Frederick Douglass. Johnson had prepared to deliver an incendiary speech, but Brown urged him to soften his rhetoric and for the Guard members not to carry arms. In October, Brown returned to Philadelphia to recruit Blacks to serve with him. Johnson wanted to join, but Sarah was expecting their first child and Brown refused to allow him to volunteer.

The Council, under Johnson’s leadership, successfully aided fugitive slaves, but in 1859 Johnson was forced to flee the city to avoid imprisonment for assisting them and the Johnsons returned to Albany. By 1862, the politics regarding Black enlistments was shifting because: the number of White enlistments declined: the Union Army suffered several major defeats: and an ever-increasing number of contrabands could enlist to provide help for the Union cause. On July 17, 1862, Congress passed the Second Confiscation and Militia Act that freed slaves whose masters joined the Confederate Army. Two days later, slavery was abolished in the territories of the United States. President Lincoln presented the preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet on July 22 and the official Emancipation Proclamation was announced in January 1863. Thereafter, recruitment of Blacks was earnestly pursued. On March 3, 1863, General Order No. 323 was enacted by the President which allowed for the enlistment of two undercooks of African descent and indicating that

they would be mustered into service, listed on muster rolls, paid, and discharged in the same manner as other soldiers. Within two months, the Bureau of Colored Troops was established.

These laws and orders were established after March 1862. So, how could Johnson, a dark-skinned Black, be present and fight at the Battle of New Bern? Unknown to the majority of readers, many Blacks were serving in a military capacity in 1861. Some men were able to enlist in White regiments as they were light-skinned and could pass as White. Others were accepted despite their color as certain officials recognized the need for additional troops as well as respecting the bravery of individuals presenting themselves to fight.

Johnson was one of these early Black soldiers. He had moved to Norwich, CT, and after Fort Sumter, tried to enlist with the 2nd Connecticut Infantry Regiment, formed in 1861. He was refused enlistment due to his color. However, he and others were allowed to unofficially attach themselves to the regiment. Johnson referred to this as his “enlistment as an independent man.” Even though his status was unclear and there are sparse or no records of such, Johnson and others fought at the first Battle of Bull Run on July 19, 1861. When the three-month enlistment period was up, the 2nd Connecticut Infantry Regiment disbanded. Johnson and others then attached themselves to the 8th Connecticut Infantry Regiment, calling themselves the 8th Colored Volunteers. Johnson would soon become part of the Burnside Expedition and be present at Roanoke Island and New Bern. How do we know this if there are no official military records? Because Johnson was a war correspondent during the Civil War, for a newspaper in Boston, the *Pine and Palm*, published by James Redpath, a Scottish-American abolitionist. The *Pine and Palm* focused on Black nationalist ideas of emigration and resettlement, particularly to Haiti. Johnson contributed nine letters that were written contemporaneously between 1861 and 1862 and each was published within a two-week period by the *Pine and Palm*. These letters as well as Johnson’s autobiography published in 1900, provide additional information about his service and prove that Johnson served with the Union Army prior to the formation of the USCT. It has also been observed that “Johnson’s letters exemplify nineteenth-century structural conventions for both newspaper and letter writing.”

Of the nine letters written by Johnson during this period, there are two letters of particular interest and worth citing in their entirety. First, a letter written on November 11, and published November 23, 1861, while attached to the 8th Connecticut in Annapolis, MD:

*I am again at the seat of war, and again preparing for active service. Our regiment (the 8<sup>th</sup> C.V.) in General Ambrose E. Burnside's Division and our destination is said to be South Carolina, and we shall in all probability reinforce General (Thomas W.) Sherman. Annapolis has been chosen as a place of rendezvous, because it is a first-class shipping port; it is located on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay and its facilities for camping purposes must be complete. There are now at this port, and attached to this Division, the 21<sup>st</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, 51<sup>st</sup> New York and the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Connecticut regiments, numbering about 6,000 men. There are to be six other regiments joined to the Division which will augment the number to 12,000 or 13,000. We expect to sail from here about the 25<sup>th</sup> inst.*

*The election here last week, whilst it resulted in a Union victory, demonstrated the fact that Annapolis is not quite free from secesh yet, and the process of purging it must go on.*

*The proscribed Americans (and there are many), attached to this regiment have since their encampment here, formed themselves into a defensive association. They propose to cultivate a correct knowledge of the manual of arms and military evolutions, with a view to self-protection. The association is based upon the principles of military discipline, morality and literature; and they hope by a strict observance of the rules and regulations they have adopted, to do credit to their people, and honor themselves. The name of the association is Self-Defenders of Connecticut, and their officers are: – Wim. H. Johnson, Norwich, Conn., first officer; Frederick C. Cross, Hartford, second officer; Prince Robinson,*



*Norwalk, third officer. In forming this association, we have been actuated by a conviction that the time is not far distant when the black man of this country will be summoned to show his hand in this struggle for liberty.*

Johnson and the 8th Connecticut became part of the Burnside Expedition to eastern North Carolina, and he was present at the Battle of Roanoke Island in February 1862. However, the 8th Connecticut did not participate in the actual battle but rather, were positioned in a defensive position on the other side of the island from the fighting. It is interesting that Blacks within the 8th Connecticut established their own military group, and that Johnson revealed their names. Again, a search in military records of the time does not reveal these men as being enlisted.

The second letter written from March 11-14, 1862, provides proof of the sail from Roanoke to New Bern and Johnson's participation in the battle (published in the *Pine and Palm* on April 3, 1862):

*March 11, 1862-Seven o'clock A.M. Everything being ready our fleet sailed. Ten o'clock P.M., anchored for the night. March 12 seven o'clock A.M.; made sail. We are on Pamlico Sound headed for the Neuse River, four o'clock P.M. entered the mouth of the river; eight o'clock, let our anchor go. We have had a fine sail today.*

*March 13. Ten o'clock A.M. Disembarked with safety in Hollow's Creek, our landing being covered by the guns of the gunboats. Eleven o'clock, we succeeded in driving in the enemy's pickets. We are moving on to New Bern. The rebels retreated from their first battery, without discharging a gun. We are in hot pursuit of them; the roads are very muddy; it is raining. Seven and a half o'clock; a halt has been made for the night; we are exposed to a drenching rain. We expect hard work tomorrow.*

*March 14. Seven o'clock A.M.-we are engaging the rebels. They are behind water and sand batteries. The fight is waxing warm. Many brave souls have been sent*

*to their last account; and a larger number of traitors have been made to bite the dust. I forbear to name the locality. The fleet is also engaged.*

*Nine o'clock A.M.-The rebels are fighting like devils; they do not give an inch; their slaves are working their guns. I cannot stand that. This may be the last line from me; for now, I go into the field armed with a revolver, and a sure rifle; and shall take my post to defend the colors of my regiment. We must win the day, though half our number are slain.*

*One o'clock P.M.-Thank God! The battle is ended. Blood has ceased to flow. Victory perches on our banners, but we have paid dearly for it. At eleven o'clock we broke the enemy's ranks; their right wing gave way. The Eighth, with the Fourth and Fifth Rhode Island and the Eleventh C(Connecticut)V(Volunteers) drove their left. They retreated to a third battery which they held till twelve o'clock when they were again driven from their position. Their flag came down and the Stars and Stripes were run up in its place, amid the almost deafening shouts of our brave and victorious army.*

*We have, for two days, fought them in their well-constructed batteries and rifle pits covering a space of twelve miles in a dense forest of tall pines and obstinate underbrush, on a poorly constructed railroad and a turnpike which was covered with a slippery mud, and raining all the time. If it does not satisfy them that Uncle Sam is in earnest, and that Old Abe does not mean to split them like rails, we will give them another turn, this time near Richmond.*

*While the army was doing their duty so nobly, the invincible (Louis M.) Goldsborough with the fleet, had bombarded the city, and set it on fire and our gunboats are at its wharves. This is glory enough for this time, don't you think so?*

*Four o'clock P.M.-The railroad bridge is ablaze and everything is in ruins.*

Subsequently, Johnson participated in the siege of Fort Macon, but soon fell ill and in June of 1862 returned to Albany. When the USCT was finally formed, Johnson became a recruiting officer for the New York State Colored Troops as well as for the famed 54th Massachusetts Regiment.

After the war, Johnson went back to his barber shop on Maiden Lane in Albany. He became a major force in Black politics in Albany and New York State and was widely regarded as the “Sage of Maiden Lane.”

Johnson died in October 1918, six months after his wife, Sarah. He had been cared for by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Albany. The Johnsons are buried at Albany Rural Cemetery in unmarked graves.

Documentation regarding Johnson’s military service was corroborated by his letters to the Pine and Palm as well as his autobiography. It is clear from these writings that he was not the only Black in the 8th Connecticut Infantry at the Battle of New Bern. With the exception of Frederick C. Cross and Prince Robinson mentioned in Johnson’s letter of November 11, 1861, we do not have any other names of those Blacks who fought in the Union Army nor those who fought onboard the ships of the Union Navy at the Battle of New Bern...an area requiring further research.

William Henry Johnson died in relative obscurity with no military marker to commemorate his service to our country. We will, however, remember and honor him at the New Bern Battlefield.

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### **About the Author**

Claudia Houston loves history, genealogy, writing and research. She utilizes all those skills as a Board Member and Historian for the New Bern Historical Society, writing monthly stories for the 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 of New Paltz, NY and a Master of Public Administration degree from PACE University.



**“NORTH CAROLINA REVISITED”  
THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM GARRISON REED**

**Jim Hodges**

On September 30, 1884, William Garrison Reed, a resident of Dorchester, Massachusetts and a veteran of the War Between the States, set out on a much anticipated journey to revisit the areas where he had been stationed during the war years. His traveling companion, Comrade McIntire, was also like Reed a veteran and former member of the forty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. Their travels mostly by train took them to various places in eastern North Carolina including Weldon, Goldsboro, Whitehall (Seven Springs), Kinston, New Bern, and Washington. Although the total trip was only eighteen days, Reed documented his experiences with his skills as an amateur photographer, as well as, maintaining a detailed diary.

Having been stationed in New Bern from October 1862 to June 1863, it had been twenty two years since he last visited the old town. In his own words Reed stated that “the visit was exceedingly interesting. Those who had been in the Southern army were particularly cordial and anxious to do all they could to make our trip agreeable. All were hospitable and hoped that more of the boys who wore the Blue in North Carolina would pay them a visit”.

While in New Bern, they stayed in the Gaston House Hotel where during the war enlisted soldiers had not been permitted. They walked the streets of New Bern recollecting old memories and identifying structures from the past that had survived. Of meaningful interest was their visit to the National Cemetery. Reed’s personal observation was that “ the friends of those buried there can feel assured that the last resting place of their loved ones is as well cared for and as beautiful as any but the most expensive of our own ‘cities of the dead’. The National Government has provided that in these respects its dead heroes shall be perpetually honored.”

On May 6, 1926, a newspaper article from the Morning New Bernian states William Garrison Reed had donated to the New Bern library a special “North Carolina Revisited” album chronicling his 1884 trip to eastern North Carolina with commentary and a collection of forty-eight photographs that he had taken. Mr. Reed stated “that he is breaking up his housekeeping and that he wants to present some of his pictures here, where they will be preserved for future generations...”

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Special appreciation to the Kellenberger Room for the information contained in this article. The photographs are the courtesy of the New Bern Historical Society and the Kellenberger Room.



The Gaston House / Formerly located on the south side of the current 300 block of South Front Street, the Gaston House Hotel became the Union Hotel, the Hotel Chattawka, and later the Hotel Governor Tryon until it was destroyed by fire in November 1965. The site today is occupied by BB&T/Truist bank.



HQ 44th Mass , Isaac Taylor House / Located on the east side of the 200 block of Craven Street, the federal style house circa 1792 was built and occupied by Isaac Taylor and his family until the advent of the 20th century. During the Civil War occupation of New Bern, the house served as the headquarters for the 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. The individuals on the steps are thought to be Miss Frances Taylor, daughter of Isaac Taylor, and her great nephew, Charles Slover Hollister, Sr..





Where the 44th Mass made Dress Parades, Broad Street / At the intersection of Broad and Craven Streets and viewing east on Broad Street, the Neuse River can be seen in the distance. This area familiar to William Garrison Reed was where the 44th Mass conducted dress parades. None of the structures in this photograph survive today.



Provost Marshall's Office and Guard House, Oaksmith House / The Simpson-Oaksmith House was located on the southeast corner of East Front and Pollock Streets. During the Civil War Union occupation it was the Provost Marshall's HQ and the Guard House for District #1. The house was demolished in the early 1970s and today is a vacant lot.



Quarters of Co. E, 44th Mass, Broad Street / The Cutting-Allen House was located on the north side of the 200 block of Broad Street beside the current Sudan Temple.

In 1980 it was relocated next to the New Bern Academy on New Street and has been beautifully restored. The photograph with the Union troops was taken circa 1863 and most likely Company E, 44th Mass. The photographer is unknown. The other image of the house was taken by Wm. Garrison Reed in October 1884



Quarters of Co. D, 44th Mass., Pearce House & Dependency / The Pearce House and dependency were located on the south side of the 200 block of Pollock Street. During the Union occupation of New Bern during the Civil War they served as quarters for Company D of the 44th Mass Regiment. The buildings were demolished circa 1960.



Current Photograph; National Cemetery; Graves Morse, Rollins, King / When Reed and McIntire visited “Little” Washington, they traveled a few miles west of the town to Rawl’s Mills. This site is where the 44th Mass had an encounter with the Confederate forces and sustained casualties. Although they had recollections of where the graves had been, no markers were present and the ground had become a cornfield. When Reed returned to Massachusetts he consulted with those that had been present at the burials of their comrades and forwarded his findings to the Superintendent of the National Cemetery at New Bern. He requested that the remains of his comrades be removed from Rawl’s Mills and be reburied in the National Cemetery. In May 1885, Reed received a letter from the Superintendent in New Bern stating that his request had been honored. Union soldiers Charles Morse, Charles E. Rollins, and \_\_\_\_\_ King had been removed from their neglected graves at Rawl’s Mills and reinterred in the beautiful National Cemetery.

**About the Author** Jim Hodges attended UNC Chapel Hill earning an undergraduate degree in Chemistry and a post graduate dental degree. After serving as a U.S. Army dentist and enjoying several years of international travel, Jim returned to New Bern and practiced dentistry until his retirement in 2012. He is passionate about New Bern and its rich history as the Curator of the New Bern Historical Society.



## **DR. ISAAC GUION PATRIOT AND EARLY LEADER**

**Charles K. McCotter, Jr.**

**D**uring and after the Revolutionary War, Dr. Isaac Guion's roles ranged from surgeon to merchant to civic leader. Dr. Guion served also in the Continental Army under the leadership of General George Washington. Later after the war, he was selected as a delegate to the North Carolina Convention which ratified the United States Constitution. His path from New Rochelle, NY, to leadership in North Carolina begins with his French Huguenot heritage.

His great-grandfather, Louis Guion, was among French Huguenot refugees fleeing from La Rochelle, France, and religious persecution in the late 1680s. The refugees settled in NY state and named their community New Rochelle. Isaac Guion was born in New Rochelle and baptized on March 30, 1741, at the US Dutch Reformed Church.

As a young man, Guion lived briefly on the island of St. Croix in the West Indies. Around 1774, he settled on Weeks Point in the White Oak River (now Swansboro) in Onslow County. He practiced medicine and became a prominent merchant with business connections in New Bern. Soon, Guion was elected to represent Onslow County in the Third North Carolina Provincial Congress that met in Hillsborough on August 21, 1775. The Provincial Congress authorized the formation of two regiments of 500 troops each in the Continental Line under Colonels James Moore and Robert Howe and six battalions of 500 Minutemen each.

### **Military Service**

The 1st NC Regiment was organized September 1, 1775, with men from the Wilmington District and the Salisbury District. Guion was appointed surgeon to the 1st NC Regiment under Col. Moore

on September 1, 1775. Yet on December 22, 1775, Guion resigned from the 1st NC Regiment and his post as surgeon. James Geekie was appointed surgeon of the regiment “in the room of Dr. Isaac Guion who neglects his duty.” Subsequently, on July 5, 1776, Guion was appointed the position of Commissary to purchase, pack, and distribute rations of food and supplies to two independent companies of militia on the coast.

On December 11, 1776, Guion was appointed Commissary of the 9th Regiment of Continentals, of which his relative, John Pugh Williams, was colonel. The 9th NC Regiment, authorized on November 28, 1776, was assigned to the Southern Department. It was first placed in the 1st NC Brigade under Brigadier General James Moore. On February 5, 1777, it was placed in the 3rd NC Brigade under the newly appointed Brigadier General Francis Nash.

Guion’s role changed again in March 1777, when he was transferred as Paymaster to the 7th Regiment under Col. James Hogun. In this capacity, he served until June 1778. One resolution of the Committee on the Treasury in Philadelphia referred to him in August 1777 as Paymaster for both the Fourth and Seventh battalions of Continental troops in North Carolina.

All NC regiments were reorganized as ordered by the Continental Congress on May 29, 1778, due to low numbers in their ranks. The 7th NC Regiment was essentially disbanded on June 1, 1778, and all field officers including Isaac Guion were sent back to North Carolina to recruit men to refill the ranks.

A year later, May 3, 1779, Guion was elected to the Council of State, and he served in the 1779–80 sessions. During this time, he was importing salt and other needed supplies for the Continental Army. He and Joseph Leech were authorized to charter vessels to transport prisoners of war out of the state. Although elected to another term in the Council of State on April 21, 1780, Guion was among the patriots taken captive at Charleston, SC on May 12, 1780. He was shown as Surgeon for the North Carolina 1st Battalion. At some time after his capture, he was paroled and returned to New Bern. In January 1781, Guion was again attending sessions of the Council of State, and in

1782 he was elected to represent Onslow County in the North Carolina Senate.

### **Residence in New Bern**

Near the end of the American Revolution, he moved to New Bern, although he retained business connections in Swansboro. Guion represented the borough town of New Bern in the North Carolina House of Commons in the sessions of 1789, 1790, 1793–94, and 1795. Guion was also a delegate from New Bern to the North Carolina Convention in Fayetteville, where he voted for ratification of the United States Constitution in November 1789. For almost a year, North Carolina had stood as an independent nation. Eleven states had ratified the new constitution. However, North Carolinians were concerned about individual rights and liberties and states' rights. Ironically, North Carolina was faced with the potential costs of federal tariffs on North Carolina trade and the instability of paper money. However, much of the opposition diminished after James Madison introduced the Bill of Rights in Congress. Thus, the delegates voted to ratify the United States Constitution, making NC the twelfth state to join the United States.

President Washington visited New Bern from April 20-22, 1791, as a part of his Southern Tour. Washington was met by New Bern citizens at West's ferry on the Neuse River on April 20. Washington was presented with an address signed by James Coor, Mayor Joseph Leech, Federal District Court Judge John Sitgreaves, Benjamin Williams, Daniel Carthy, William McClure, Samuel Chapman, and Isaac Guion.

Isaac Guion had the honor of giving the welcoming address to President George Washington on behalf of the town of New Bern and St. John's Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of which Guion was the Worshipful Master from 1788 to 1791. Washington was a fellow Mason.

President Washington enjoyed his stay in New Bern, including: his "exceedingly good lodgings" in the John Wright Stanly home; the entertainment at Tryon Palace; and "the beautiful women with whom the town apparently was amply endowed." His only complaint,

certainly a minor one, involved the failure of his hosts to offer him griddle cakes during his stay.

Guion sent a letter of April 22, 1791, to Joseph Clay in Georgia via the president's party writing "I cou'd not omit Writing you by so favorable an opp(ty) the president of the U.S. having favored Us with a Short Visit & going to your State Colo Jackson of his family condescended to be the Bearer." Clay was a staunch patriot and served as Deputy Paymaster General of the Continental Army for the Southern Department. Colonel William Jackson was Secretary to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, having signed the Constitution attesting to amendments to the document. and on Washington's visit to New Bern, Jackson was Washington's Secretary.

Having been named a churchwarden for Christ Church (Episcopal), New Bern, by the Assembly of 1789, Guion represented Christ Church New Bern at the convention of the Protestant Episcopal church, held at Tarboro in May 1794, at which a church constitution was drawn up.

His business endeavors continued in Swansboro 1795–96, where Guion was listed as a partner in the firm of Ferrand and Guion. By 1800, he was one of the commissioners of navigation of the Port of New Bern.

Guion's personal life included marriage to Ferebe (Ferebee) Pugh Williams Lee, widow of Colonel Stephen Lee of the White Oak River. She was born on May 26, 1746 at Fort Barnwell in Craven County, and was the sister of Governor Benjamin Williams, Rebecca Williams, and Mary Williams.

Guion and Ferebe had five children: Isaac Lee, an attorney who died at age thirty-nine; Ferebe Elizabeth Pugh, second wife of Francis Hawks; Ann Maria, wife of Dr. Hugh Jones; John Williams, who married first Mary Wade and second Mary Tillman; and Margaret Sarah, wife of Dr. Andrew Scott. Ferebe Guion Hawks was the mother of the Reverend Francis L. Hawks. A large extended family of grandchildren became prominent residents of New Bern also.



Isaac Guion died in New Bern in May 1803 at the age of 62 and was buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery. His wife Ferebe (1746–1811) was buried beside him.

### **A Tribute to a Patriot**

On October 30, 2021, members of the local chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) gathered in Cedar Grove Cemetery to pay tribute to Isaac Guion, a patriot of the American Revolution. The author of this article is the sixth great grandson of Isaac Guion and served as the keynote speaker for the ceremony. I am proud of my heritage and the many roles in which Isaac Guion performed for our community and our country – merchant, surgeon, commissary, paymaster, delegate, legislator, Master Mason, and a friend of George Washington.

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## About the Author

Ken McCotter completed Law School at University of North Carolina and served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge for 16 years. He has been partner in various law firms in New Bern practicing civil litigation, arbitration and mediation with a specialty is admiralty and maritime law. Ken has been the Past President of the New Bern Historical Society and is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution. He is the sixth great grandson of Major Isaac Guion.



Members of the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution gather in Cedar Grove Cemetery in October 2021 to mark the grave of Isaac Guion. Ken McCotter stands in front on the far right next to his wife Pat.



## GILBERT STANLEY WATERS AND HIS BUGGYMOBILES

### Jack Waters

**G**ilbert Stanley Waters (1868-1950) was the son in the thriving G. H. Waters & Son Buggy and Carriage Factory at 78 Broad Street in New Bern (now the site of the New Bern Firemen's Museum). In 2010, the Waters family installed a bronze plaque there to commemorate the site of the Waters Buggy and Carriage Factory. Gilbert was on a business trip to Baltimore in early 1899 where he observed several horseless buggies being driven on the streets of this Maryland city. He learned that they were "steamers". These horseless carriages powered by a steam engine caught his attention and imagination.



**Buggy-mobile at the North Carolina Museum of History**

From New Bern Sun Journal Article, April 10, 2015



**Buggymobile-1903: Automobile Reference Collection**

<https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/29735>

Upon his return to New Bern, Gilbert began experimenting with building a similar vehicle from one of his horse-drawn buggies but one that would be powered by a gasoline engine. He acquired a one cylinder, five horsepower, sawmill gasoline engine and installed it under the seat of his buggy. He then replaced the carriage wheels with four bicycle type wheels of solid rubber. He fashioned a bicycle type chain drive

to the rear axle of his buggy, linking it to the engine. A crank was installed just below the seat to start the engine. A steering tiller was mounted immediately in front on the driver's seat to allow the turning of the front two wheels.

By late 1899, Gilbert was ready to test drive his gasoline powered "Buggymobile" on the streets of New Bern. He purchased five gallons of gasoline from Baltimore and had it shipped to his factory on Broad Street via steamboats. He believed the Baltimore gasoline was refined better than the gasoline available in New Bern at the time.

Gilbert appeared on Broad Street with his new invention and crowds gathered along the street to see this contraption. He cranked the engine, and the noise was so loud, that it frightened the horses and caused many people to cover their ears. To the amazement of the crowd, he was able to drive his Buggymobile safely down the street at 12 miles per hour. This marked the first gasoline-powered vehicle to be built in the South.

Gilbert, needless to say, was very excited about his invention and developed a business plan to hire 2,000 men with a weekly payroll of \$60,000 to mass produce his Buggymobile. He was unsuccessful in



finding any bank or banker willing to invest in his plan. Even his own father said, “No one will be willing to give up their horse drawn buggy for this contraption.” Unfortunately, his father would be correct.

Meanwhile, three years earlier in 1896, Henry Ford had created his own gasoline-powered vehicle. Subsequently in 1898, he found financial assistance and started mass production of his Ford Model T in 1908. There is no record that Gilbert knew of Henry Ford’s venture, because no newspaper articles about Ford’s invention appeared in the local papers during these early years.

Alas, with no foreseeable funding, Gilbert resigned himself to continue in his successful, family-owned buggy and carriage business that was turning out 100 buggies and carriages a year. However, he did not abandon his inventive spirit. In March of 1903, Gilbert cannibalized his 1899 Buggymobile to build a more advanced model, known

as the 1903 Buggymobile. He ordered a more advanced five horsepower gasoline engine from Holley Motors of Bradford, PA, which built engines for their motorcycles. This engine had a muffler and was water cooled. His 1903 model Buggymobile would accommodate 3 to 4 passengers and have speeds ranging from 5 to 25 mph, depending on the number of passengers. Gilbert fashioned a radiator on the front of the Buggymobile to increase its cooling capacity. The steering tiller was replaced with a newer model. Wooden spoke wheels with solid rubber tires were custom built and installed that offered a smoother ride than the original solid rubber tires.

Gilbert rolled out his 1903 Model Buggymobile in June and drove it safely, and less noisily, on the streets of New Bern. A second effort to secure funds for his venture to mass produce this vehicle failed. Rejected again, he returned to his buggy and carriage business until 1917, when the factory closed due to the automobile fast replacing the buggies and carriages.

Gilbert continued to drive his 1903 Buggymobile on the streets of New Bern through the mid-1940s. Gilbert and his 1903 Buggymobile were featured on the Gabriel Heatter radio show, “We The People” on March 7, 1939. The show shipped his car to New York and Gilbert drove down Times Square into Central Park, with such celebrities as radio comedian Phil Baker and others. Later that day, he appeared on the show with his Buggymobile and ‘cranked up’ the car on the nationally broadcasted radio show much to the delight of the studio audience.

Gilbert donated his 1903 Buggymobile to the North Carolina History Museum in Raleigh in 1948, where the Buggymobile is permanently exhibited. Soon thereafter, Gilbert passed away on February 15, 1950, and is buried beside his wife Margaret “Maggie” Scales Waters in Cedar Grove Cemetery. Although his Buggymobile did not bring him fame and fortune, Waters was posthumously inducted into the North Carolina Transportation Hall of Fame in August of 2012. While he gained recognition for his creation after this death, one has to wonder what could have happened if he had secured financial backing for the production of his Buggymobile. A banker who turned Gilbert down for a loan commented years later that: “If I had known then what

I know now, Mr. Waters and I might both have been among the rich men of the country now.

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## About the Author

Jack Waters is the grandson of Gilbert S. Waters, the inventor, owner and manufacturer of the Buggymobile. Jack attended Concord College in Athens, West Virginia and Norfolk College of William and Mary in Norfolk, Virginia. He was an investor owner of public utilities and retired from Chesterfield County (VA) Utilities in 2000.



## THE CAPTURE OF COMPANY A AT CROATAN

Edward Ellis

### Prologue

In the turmoil of the Civil War, Union military forces occupied New Bern from March 1862 until the end of the conflict in 1865. During this time, the most southern of the defenses under New Bern's immediate command was a D-shaped earthwork guarding the railroad at Croatan, 11 miles below the town. Isolated and vulnerable, the small outpost was variously referred to as Croatan, Croatan Station, and, occasionally, Fort Croatan. The blockhouse fort at Havelock – the next federal defensive point six miles farther south – was under the command of Union authorities in Beaufort.

On May 5, 1864, the 52-man garrison at Croatan was attacked and captured by an overwhelming force of Confederate soldiers. Outnumbered by as much as thirty-to-one, Company A of the Rhode Island Heavy Artillery engaged in a brisk gunfight for more than six hours before agreeing to terms of surrender.

The Union prisoners then began a harrowing journey by foot and rail to their ultimate and dire destination in Georgia. There, most of the soldiers were imprisoned in the hell-on-earth called Andersonville. Of the fifty-two men captured just south of New Bern, only a handful lived to see the war's end.

### Background

From the opening of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad between New Bern and the coast, Croatan Station was an important rail stop in the rich farm country south of the city. Located at the intersection of County Line Road, Catfish Lake Road, and the railroad, it served a productive area of plantations known collectively as "The Croatan."



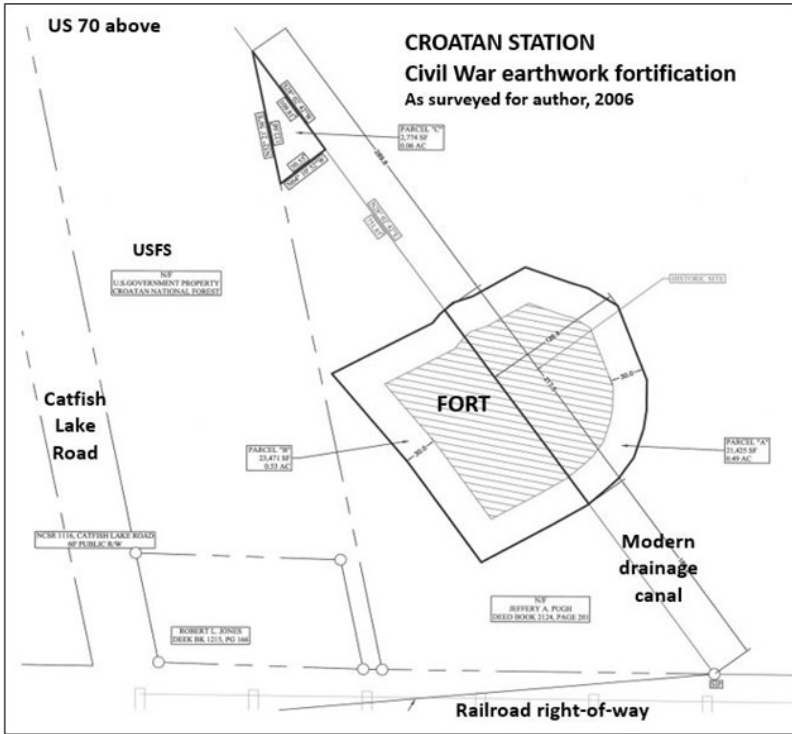
In anticipation of the invasion by Union forces, Southern authorities began the construction of an impressive line of earthworks at Croatan in 1861. Abandoned the day before the fall of New Bern, the Croatan line was of little use until the victorious Union general – Ambrose E. Burnside – decided that a string of small military outposts was needed to protect the valuable railway connecting his twin prizes of New Bern and Fort Macon.

Burnside's forces built a large, sturdy, wooden blockhouse fort by the train tracks at Evan's Mill a few miles south of town. Next, they occupied the one-acre earthen stronghold that anchored the Croatan line. Six miles farther south, another substantial Union-built blockhouse was constructed beside the Slocum Creek trestle at Havelock Station. Next came the former Confederate barracks at Newport, and then a huge tent encampment called Carolina City at present-day Morehead City. These fortified positions were typically manned by 50 to 200 troops. The sites were remote, high-risk, and, in some cases, unhealthy, so units were rotated through regularly.

By 1864, the dog-bone-shaped territory with New Bern at one end and Beaufort and Fort Macon at the other was under the leadership of General Innis N. Palmer. Palmer's command was known to federal authorities as the Department of North Carolina. While that might sound impressive, the small island of land in the middle of the Confederate South was perpetually surrounded by roving armies of Rebel forces, serially harassed and repeatedly attacked.

Each of the five forts was charged with the protection of rail sections five-to-seven-miles-long running through a no-man's-land of thick pine woodlands and swamps. In addition to the forts themselves, the favorite targets of the Southern guerrillas were the federal trains, the tracks, and the telegraph wires mounted alongside.

Of all the Union's fortified positions guarding the railroad, Croatan Station was the most inaccessible and isolated; thus, the most vulnerable. The single-cannon fort was something like a large donut of dirt, its sides thirty feet wide and ten feet tall. Throughout most of its occupation, the men at Croatan Station lived in tents pitched outside the walls.



On November 6, 1863, the duty at Croatan Station fell to Company A of the Fifth Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, about fifty men under the command of Captain John Aigan.

## The Fight

Capt. Aigan's first inkling that something was amiss on the morning of May 5, 1864, was a small parade of freedmen. Some former slaves had been permitted to remain in the area for work among the turpentine trees and were loyal to the Northerners they viewed as liberators. That morning an excited woman rushed in claiming Rebel soldiers were on the road near her house while others were cutting through a defensive barricade. Aigan doubted the accuracy of the report and continued his breakfast. The woman, however, was soon followed by one man and then another telling the same story.

Curiosity now aroused, the captain sent a sergeant with ten men to scout one path while he mounted the fort's only horse and headed alone up the road toward New Bern. In little less than a mile, Aigan was astonished to find himself amid two dozen Southern troops. In seconds, he wheeled the horse and applied spurs. It's not clear if the Southerners were too surprised to react quickly or if they hoped to capture the rider as some yelled "Cut him off!" In either event, the adrenaline-charged Aigan wasn't shot and made his escape back to the fort.

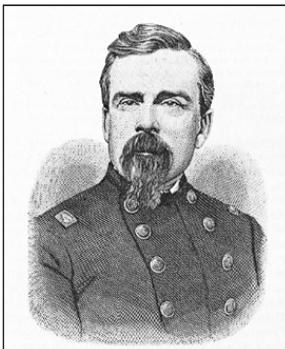
Once there, he issued brisk orders to strike the tents and move all the supplies, rations, and water into the circular earthwork. The men swarmed to prepare for battle. Some rushed to close the draw-bridge entrance as Second Lieutenant William H. Durfee, Jr. opened the magazine for the distribution of ammunition. Everyone moved even faster when the sergeant and his scouts returned at the double-quick shouting that the enemy was advancing.

What Aigan and his scouts did not know was the overwhelming size of the force approaching them. As many as 1,500 Confederate troops under the command of General James Dearing had already attacked the blockhouse and encampment at Evan's Mill, between Croatan and New Bern, driving its small Union garrison across the Trent River. Dearing's force had torn up part of the railroad and cut the telegraph wires leaving Croatan with neither a warning of the assault nor hope of reinforcements.

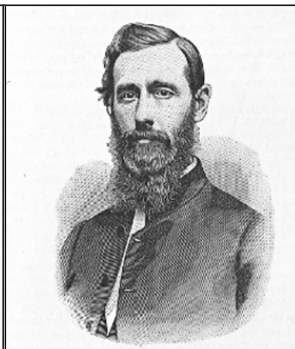
The previous afternoon, the regiment's chaplain, Reverend Henry S. White, arrived at Croatan on horseback. Rev. White regularly circulated among the several camps of the Fifth Rhode Island around New Bern bringing newspapers and Bible tracts. His routine was to visit each tent, converse and pray with the soldiers, and often conduct religious services. On the morning of May 5, the pastor was hustled inside while his horse and Capt. Aigan's were tied in a rifle pit behind the fort.

Rev. White survived the war and became one of the most valuable chroniclers of the story of Company A at Croatan. White later recorded:

“Skirmishing commenced between seven and eight o’clock, and not far from nine o’clock the enemy’s cavalry appeared nearly a mile distant, coming upon the railroad between us and New Berne. They seemed to come rapidly, without fear, and in considerable force. As the column was in fair view, Captain Aigan ordered a shell to be thrown from the six-pounder brass piece, which was the only defense of the fort except for the muskets of the men ... The shell from our gun struck about four feet from the horse of [a Rebel officer] and, passing into the column, cut off the horse’s head.”



**Captain John Aigan**



**Chaplain Rev. Henry S.  
White**



**General Innis Palmer,  
USA**



**George Nathaniel Folk,  
CSA**

As incredible as it may seem, another witness, Pvt. Sylvester B. Hiscox of Company A, recalled that at this moment, Capt. Aigan's horse, frightened by the cannon blast, broke free and ran down the railroad tracks. The runaway horse was stopped and seized by the officer who had just lost his mount. He grabbed the reins of Aigan's horse, swung up into the saddle, and was thus re-mounted within moments of his horse having been shot from under him.

Continuing Rev. White's battle account:

"The column was at once halted and seemed thrown into considerable confusion, as it filed into the woods on our left. A rapid fire was kept on them until they disappeared into the woods ... Soon a sharp fire was opened upon us from the woods, near a house on the left of the railroad. Gradually the line was extended on the right and the left until we were entirely surrounded. The return fire from the fort was as rapid and heavy as we could make it. Solid shot, shell, and canister were thrown first in one direction and then in another, and, as our gun was a field piece, mounted on an elevated platform, it commanded the approach in every direction. In using it the men were ordered to keep well down to escape rebel fire. The rifles of the men also did their part of the work. The sharpshooters from the trees were more annoying to us than the fire from any other position. The [fort's] gun became so hot that it was impossible to work it, and one of the cartridges took fire when the gunners were attempting to load it, throwing them against the wall of the fort. The men were compelled to handle their rifles by the gun slings they became so hot."

## **Surrender and Captivity**

In his published statements, Rev. White praised Capt. Aigan for being "cool and brave" under fire and noted how Lt. Durfee efficiently distributed ammunition and "was constantly at his post." White said that at 2:30 p.m. – more than six hours after the first shots – "a flag of truce was seen coming down the railroad." Only one Union

soldier had been injured but Rev. White's horse had been killed. The number of Confederate casualties is unknown. When Aigan went out to parley, the Southerners demanded surrender. Aigan demurred and was threatened that artillery was being brought up. White said that during the hiatus "a large number of the enemy rose from their cover and came into sight, and those that had not good positions rose up and took them." Capt. Aigan returned to the fort to consult with Lt. Durfee and Rev. White. All agreed that it was only a question of time before they were out of ammunition and water, that they were surrounded by an overwhelming force, and that artillery would reduce the fort and "sacrifice the men" to no end.

Under the white flag, Aigan agreed to surrender the fort "with the honors of war, and the troops march[ed] out with arms and music." Hundreds of Confederates immediately began to strip the fort, the men, and even White's dead horse of everything that could be seized; the beginnings of the prisoners' destitution.

The precise size of the Confederate force engaged at Croatan Station is not certain. While it's known that Dearing's force was more than a thousand troops, a May 14, 1864, report in *The Daily Confederate of Raleigh* suggests the general had divided his force to retrieve artillery by the time of the assault. The writer gave credit for the victory to five companies of the Sixth N.C. Cavalry under the command of Col. George N. Folk. In his book about the affair, Rev. White misremembered the surrender as being to "Colonel Polk."

Everyone on both sides agreed that Rev. White was not a prisoner. Nevertheless, the chaplain insisted on accompanying the captured men no matter what their collective fate.

The Fifth Rhode Island regimental commander later offered laudatory words for Capt. Aigan and his men, but General Palmer, from his perch in New Bern, expressed an opinion of a different sort. (Capt. Aigan's name is repeatedly spelled "Aegean" in the Colonel Henry Sisson's report of May 8, 1864, OR). Colonel Henry T. Sisson said Company A engaged in a "desperate fight" and "the citizens of Croatan affirm that the enemy freely acknowledged that our men fought with great gallantry." He said the men of Company A "fought

bravely and well, and did all that men could do against such unequal numbers.” Gen. Palmer, however, wrote on May 10, “Nothing indicates that a very stubborn resistance was made at Croatan.”

Company A’s sad journey began with a long, hard tramp to Kinston by way of Pollocksville during which some of them had to trade personal items for water. The march was followed by rail transport to Goldsboro, Wilmington, and through South Carolina to Georgia.

Many books have been written and movies and documentaries made about the horrors of Andersonville Prison. There is no space in this article to recount it all. Suffice it to say that every facet of ruthlessness, inhumanity, and neglect of which the human race is capable was on gaudy display there. Some 13,000 prisoners died of disease, malnutrition, exposure, and gunfire in the 30-acre rectangle of mud and filth where 45,000 men were confined. For his part in it, prison commander Major Henry Wirz was convicted after the war of murder and executed.

What we can add to the record is a memory of Private Hiscox, mentioned above, and one of the handful of survivors of the capture of Croatan Station:

“Strong hearts melted, like snow in the sun. Words are of no use. Our first thought was, have we got to stay in this pen, among these men, with no shelter but the heavens above us? And then they crowded around us, thousands of them, all clamoring and asking questions ... Oh, those many thousands of American soldiers. I’ve got to the point now when it makes my blood boil when I think for a moment of the misery that was around us. But that story – it can never be told as we felt it – has been published over and over again since the war, and I’ve told it myself, hundreds of times perhaps, but even now I don’t want to think of what we had to endure, nor think of the many thousands of brave men that laid their bones away near Andersonville prison – many of them, too, my own well-tried and dear comrades.”

## Aftermath

Of the fifty-two men of Company A taken prisoner at Croatan Station, only 19 are thought to have survived their imprisonment in Georgia. Capt. Aigan reported in 1865 that six of those 19 were “Missing, supposed to be Dead.” If correct, that would mean only 13 men lived through the ordeal. Capt. Aigan, Second Lieutenant Durfee and Rev. White survived primarily because they were housed at a less-lethal officers’ prison nearby in Macon.

Confusion about whether Croatan was defended by a wooden blockhouse or an earthen fortress began in erroneous news reports published immediately after the battle. The name “Fort Croatan” and its description as a blockhouse have persisted despite definitive evidence to the contrary. As recently as 2001, a study by an area university repeatedly called the site the “Croatan Blockhouse.” Nevertheless, the writings of those who were there, or a visit to the location, make it clear that Croatan Station was and is the site of a substantial earthen redoubt.

Except for vegetative growth and an agricultural drainage ditch cut through it in modern times, the Croatan fortification remains in 2022 much as it was on the day of the contest for its possession. It stands all but forgotten on private property. This noteworthy battle site and impressive remnant of the Croatan line built in 1861 is arguably the finest example of a Civil War-era earthwork remaining in Craven County that is not under preservation.

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**About the Author**

Eddie Ellis is a native of Craven County who spent the bulk of his career as a journalist. He's a monthly columnist for *New Bern Magazine* and the author of the books *New Bern History 101* and *Whispers of the Long Departed: Untold History of Southern Craven County, N.C.*



**CLINTON CHAPEL  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH**

**Bernard George**

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won

Shortly after the Union Army occupied New Bern on March 14, 1862, Union General Ambrose Burnside declared the following day, Sunday, to be a day of prayer and celebration throughout the city. News of the Union victory spread like wildfire across the countryside, and escaped slaves from across the region sought freedom and safety behind Union lines at New Bern. This is the setting in which a group of courageous Christian men and women of the Methodist faith met together in 1862 in an old shack near the newly built Fort Totten to form a prayer band. That prayer band would eventually lead to the formation of Clinton Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion Church, New Bern's second oldest African American church. From the chaos of the Civil War would come the promise of a new birth of freedom for the nation and especially for the formerly enslaved.

After the occupation of New Bern by Union forces, there was a surge of additional resources and manpower provided by the formerly enslaved. General Burnside ordered the employment of Negroes in building several major defensive forts, bridges, and other military projects. Fort Totten, largest of the Union forts, was built on the western edge of New Bern in 1862. By August 1862, New Bern was the best fortified town in North Carolina.

Many freedmen were employed at eight dollars a month in the construction and ongoing operations of the fort. Others worked as valuable scouts and spies, laborers, skilled carpenters, mule drivers, cooks, and other critical occupations supporting the cause of

freedom. Four artillery companies with a total of 251 enlisted men were stationed at Fort Totten. Five companies of infantry on provost-guard duty were stationed in the rear of Fort Totten with a total of 454 men. For the duration of the war, a large community of freedmen encamped nearby in an area now known as Long Wharf, supplied much needed strategic labor and resources to Fort Totten for the defense of New Bern.

Vincent Colyer, Superintendent of the Poor, noted in his Report of the Services Rendered by the Freed People to the United States Army in North Carolina: “The calm trustful faith with which these poor people came over from the enemy to our shores; the unbounded joy which they manifested themselves within our lines, and Free; made an impression on my mind not easily effaced.” Colyer went on to marvel at the sincere religious piety of the freemen who without benefit of the written word and suffering through long and painful years of oppression had been blessed by the grace of God with the truth of salvation in Jesus Christ. “In the evening after the toils of the day are over, you will hear from the cabin of nearly every family, the sweet sound of hymns sung with plaintive and touching pathos to some familiar tune... followed by the earnestly beseeching voice of prayer.”

A completely different scenario is described by historian David Cecelski in the *Waterman's Song*. “Out of those rough-hewn villages arose a great revival of African American political culture, a ferment comparable in ways to the black freedom movement that would come a century later... They organized schools, relief societies, self-help associations and churches, including St. Peter's, the first A.M.E. Zion church in the South.” The formation of Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church began with a meeting of God-fearing Christian men and women who formed a prayer band in 1862 in an old shack near Fort Totten. Although very little is known about who they were, there is evidence to indicate that many of them were of the Methodist faith. Bands are Methodism's smallest unit of church, “where two or three are gathered” (Matthew 18:20). The prayer band met weekly for more than a year, giving praise and thanks to God for deliverance from slavery with the promise of freedom and justice.

The A.M.E. Zion Church first reached the South during the Civil War. In 1863, the members of Andrew Chapel, then a black congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, sent an appeal to former Andrew Chapel members in New Haven, Connecticut, for assistance affiliating with the A.M.E. Zion Church. The Mission Board of the A. M. E. Zion Church commissioned Rev. James Walker Hood as a missionary to New Bern. Rev. Hood left New England in December 1863 and arrived in New Bern on the 20th of January 1864.

Hood soon gathered around him some older brethren who were local preachers or exhorters before the war, including Edward H. Hill (who later served in the NC House of Representatives from 1874-1876), Frank B. Moore (the 3rd pastor of Clinton Chapel) and William Ryle. The 400 members of Andrew Chapel agreed to Hood's proposal and voted to associate with the A.M.E. Zion Church. That congregation would eventually become St. Peter's, mother church of Zion Methodism in the South. St. Peter's is recognized as a direct descendant of the original Methodist congregation in New Bern that dates to 1772.

Soon after Hood began his missionary work, additional churches were added to the A.M.E. Zion Church, including Clinton Chapel in May 1864. The church was named in honor of Bishop J.J. Clinton, the founding bishop of the North Carolina Conference. Bishop Clinton visited New Bern in May 1864 and it is reported that: "Great was the joy of the people at being permitted to see a bishop of their own race, and especially a bishop who was willing to become all things to all men, that he might by all means gain some. Bishop Clinton had no hide-bound notions; whatever was necessary for the success of the Church he was ready to do. At his suggestion several persons were licensed to preach, most of whom made successful preachers." It is no wonder that the Clinton Chapel was named for such an inspiring revered and dedicated leader.

The North Carolina Conference was formally organized in New Bern on December 17, 1864, with Bishop Clinton presiding. As Bishop Hood would later write, it was "the first Afro-American Conference held in that territory over which the Confederate flag had floated. War was still raging, nevertheless Bishop Clinton with his

missionaries, gathered around a stove on a cold winter day and laid the foundation for that structure which towers up so grandly today. The work in North Carolina is the great central force in Zion Connection. Nine of the large Conferences have grown out of this beginning in North Carolina." Clinton Chapel is proud to have been represented at that first meeting of the North Carolina Conference where its early work has become an important part of the great expansion effort by the A.M.E. Zion Church in the South.

The first pastor appointed by Bishop Clinton to guide the small flock at Clinton Chapel was Reverend Henry W. Jones, newly ordained as a deacon at the 1864 conference. Among the first trustees of Clinton Chapel were Robert G. Mosley, Anthony Murphy, Frederick Douglass, Levi Kennedy, Cape Anderson, William Badger, Slant Copeland, William Barber, and Silas Hargett.

The second annual meeting of the North Carolina Conference was held in 1865 at Beaufort, NC. Reverend Henry W. Jones, the first pastor of Clinton Chapel, and Brother Amos York, who would become Clinton Chapel's second pastor, were among those ordained as elders. During the Civil War, Amos York had been Assistant Secretary to Vincent Colyer, the Army's Superintendent of the Poor in New Bern. Colyer described York as an escaped slave who was a "leading man among his people" and an "intelligent and worthy Christian." Based on a letter York wrote in 1862 to Colyer with greetings from "The elders of St. Andrew Chapel, J. C. Rew, Louis Williams, William Ryol, and R. M. Tucker," York is presumed to have been a member of that congregation. Rev. York served as conference secretary for several years and was also a lay delegate to several general conferences. Rev. Frank Moore had apparently also been a member of Andrew Chapel.

From 1863 to 1896, the national membership of the A.M.E. Zion Church increased from about five thousand to nearly half a million, primarily because of its organizing activities in the South. The membership of Clinton Chapel also grew rapidly in the years after the Civil War, and the congregation began to see the need of providing for a better place to worship and serve God.



### **Early Clinton Chapel**

by New Bern artist Gerry King

The original Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church building was constructed on Crooked Street (later renamed Church Street) under the pastorate of Reverend M.V. Marable. The land was purchased on March 14, 1879, and a large single-story Gothic Revival frame church, distinguished by a tall entrance and bell tower capped by a broach spire was completed in 1882.

In subsequent years many improvements and additions were made to the church property. However, as the years passed the church building began to deteriorate and the congregation saw the need for a new church building. A building fund drive began under the pastorate of Reverend R.F. Faulkner (1950-1954); the groundbreaking for the present church building took place on May 18, 1958, under the leadership of Reverend Goler H. Newby. The modern, contemporary church building was completed and dedicated in August 1966 under the visionary leadership of Reverend Charles H. Ewing. The original church bell was installed on granite pillars in the front grounds and today continues to call worshipers from near and far.

Many families have been active in the development and execution of the activities and programs of Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church throughout its long and storied history. Today, their descendants continue as faithful members of Clinton Chapel. For more than 160 years, Clinton Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church has stood as a testament to the faith of its founding families and dedicated pastoral leadership.

The church celebrates its rich heritage with pride, and looks forward to an even more promising future, knowing that God will continue to lead its people onward and upward in fulfillment of the promise of their faith.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;



Thou who has by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

## The Pastors of Clinton Chapel

Beginning with the first appointment by Bishop Clinton in December of 1864, have included: Henry W. Jones, Amos York (New Bern Alderman, 6th Ward, 1874), Frank Moore, Father Pitts, J.H. Mattocks (later Presiding Elder), J.B. House, L.R. Ferebee, Martin Van Buren Marable (later Presiding Elder), A.V. McIver, A.W. Allison (twice), L.B. Williams, W.H. Fulford, W.A. Keys, H.C. Phillips, H.P. Walker, J.W. Gaskille, J.H. Moseley (later Presiding Elder), D.L. Maulsby, John McKoy, S.B. Conrad, A. McCullum, J.T. Gaskill, R.H. Outicy, A. Hill, E.J. Rollins, J.J. Robinson, R.T. Mitchell, T.S. Maulsby (later Presiding Elder), Charles Cecil Coleman (later elected Bishop), A.B. Moseley (later Presiding Elder), R.H. Rutledge, P.H. Mumford, S.P. League (later Presiding Elder), W.H. Greenwood (later Presiding Elder), R.F. Faulkner (later Presiding Elder), W.C. Sapp, G.L. Newby, M.H. Beaman, C.H. Ewing (later Presiding Elder), Ronald P. McDougal, Theodore Headen (later Presiding Elder) and Rev. Dr. Jace L. Cox. The current pastor is Rev. Dr. M. Luther Hill.

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**About the Author:** Bernard George, a retired city planner and Eastern NC historian, earned a Political Science degree from North Carolina Central University. He is a native New Bernian and avid historian who traces his Craven County George-family roots back to the early-18th Century.



## “SGT. JOE STALLINGS MISSING OVER ITALY.”

Steve Shaffer

### Prelude

Over 16 million men and women would answer the call to serve in the Armed Forces when the United States entered World War II. Over 406,000 American servicemen and women would make the ultimate sacrifice in this costly global conflict. Here in Craven County, at least twelve men would serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps. One of those men from New Bern, Joseph Stallings, would pay the ultimate price in a bombing mission over Italy in the closing days of the war in Europe. It would take three long years before he was finally laid to rest in New Bern.

Joseph or Joe Stallings, was born in New Bern on November 7, 1922. He was the son of Durant Hassel Stallings of Merrimon, NC, and Lydia Bell Rogers Stallings of Newport, NC. He had four sisters all residing in New Bern, and a brother, Lt. Donald Stallings, USNR, stationed then in England. After graduation from New Bern High School, and prior to America's entry into the war, Joe moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where for one year he attended classes at the University of Nebraska. Fortunately two aunts lived in Lincoln and one provided lodging, the other assisted with locating part time employment at Gold's Department Store. College and a part time job paint another picture of a typical pre-war youth.

### Call to Service

Early in 1940, he enlisted in the National Guard at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Arkansas. Private Joe Stallings' name later appeared on a list of the officers and men of National Guard Company I, 134<sup>th</sup> Infantry, who departed Lincoln on January 6, 1941 for a full year of training at Camp Robinson.



**Images of Joe Stallings in the National Guard  
and the US Air Force**

Like many men his age he was eager for the excitement and challenges that a war could provide him in the air and so he transferred to the U.S. Army Air Force. A North Carolina newspaper article dated May 3, 1943 entitled “Aviation Cadet,” states that Stallings was “... advanced from the pre-fleet school of the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center at San Antonio, Texas. After further training, he expects to win his wings and a commission as a flying officer.” He was subsequently sent for further training in aerial gunnery at the Laredo Army Air Field where he completed his gunner qualifications in bombers in October 1943. Upon completion of gunnery school, Stallings was assigned to Lincoln Army Air Field that served as an overseas deployment staging area for bombardment groups and fighter squadrons. By mid-1944, he was on his way to Italy via England.

### **The Fateful Mission over Italy**

Now a Staff Sergeant, Stallings’ assigned unit was the 343rd Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) of the 98th Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force, comprised mostly of the Consolidated B-24J Liberator bombers. Great numbers of these heavy bombers were involved in the 1945 spring offensive in Italy codenamed Operation Grapeshot during the last stages of World War II.

The performance statistics of the B-24J of which 6,678 were produced, were impressive. The bomber was powered by four Pratt & Whitney fourteen-cylinder engines, each rated at 1200 hp (turbo-charged), and could maintain a sustained speed of 278 mph at 25,000

feet with a ceiling of 28,000 feet and range of 1,700 miles. The bomb bay could fit eight 1,600-pound bombs. The bomber sported ten .50 caliber machine guns to fend off German Luftwaffe fighter planes.

The 343rd Bombardment Squadron flew missions out of three sites in Italy — Brindisi, Manduria, and Lecce. The 343rd Bombardment Squadron would operate from Lecce from January 17, 1944 – April 19, 1945. Lecce Airfield was built in 1943 by U.S. Army Engineers, and served primarily as a 15th Air Force B-24 Liberator heavy bomber base of operations for striking strategic targets in Germany. It also was used by tactical aircraft, 12th Air Force in the Italian Campaign.

During the morning of April 8, 1945, the assigned mission was to bomb the strategically important railroad complex at Vipiteno Railroad Bridge, Italy, and Brenner Pass (elevation 4,495 ft.), a principal pass through the Eastern Alpine range. The pass has the lowest altitude among the Alpine passes of the area which forms the border of Italy and Austria. Contemporary overhead imagery clearly shows the value of a successful strike against the important rail line-of-communication (LOC) through this restrictive mountainous geography and the tunneling necessary to pass.



**April 8, 1945 - Target:  
Vipiteno Railroad  
Bridge in Italy.**

Thousand-pound bombs hit all over the mountains before finally finding the bridge.

<https://www.armyaircorps-376bg.com/tsgt-alfred-w-young-jr-514th-squadron-radio-operatorgunner8.html>

Vipiteno, Italy was a small town located just south of the Austrian/Italian border. The city's railroad bridge was heavily bombed in 1945 because the city was the main link between Germany and Italy during the war.

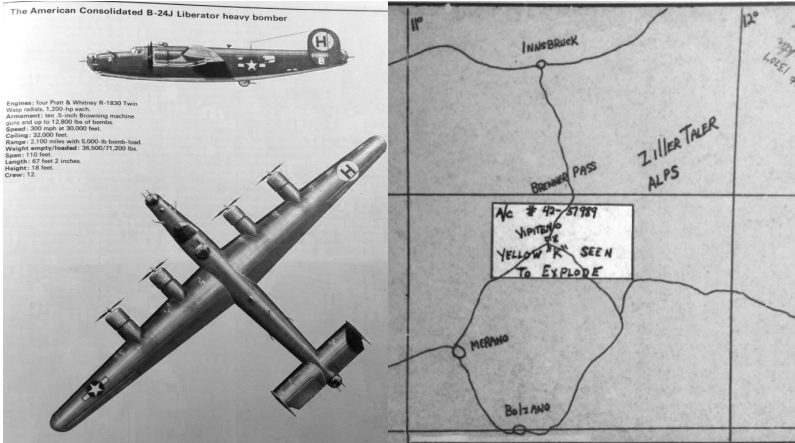
B-24J, Aircraft #42-51989, nicknamed the "Southern Belle" with a yellow "K" wing tail marking, would launch on a combat bombing mission with hundreds of other Liberators. 1st Lt. Paul Charles Bent, Jr., AAF, 21 years of age, commanded the Southern Belle air crew of five officers and seven enlisted men also just averaging 21 years of age. The enlisted members of the Southern Belle numbered seven and included: Flight Engineer; Top Turret Gun; Waist Gunner (left); Nose Turret Gunner; Ball Gunner; Tail Gunner; and the position added for this flight, "Camera."

The position of Camera is not commonly listed, but it was on this mission to photograph the strike area and effectiveness of the bombardment by the bombers. A photographic reconnaissance variant was developed for the B-24J; three cameras in the nose and three in the bomb bay. Later six cameras were emplaced in the bomb bay area. Stallings filled the temporary position of Camera.

These bombers faced deadly dangers during each mission from German fighter planes and anti-aircraft fire. For example, during a daylight raid of Berlin on March 6, 1944, sixty-eight bombers and crews were lost out of 750 B-24 bombers and B-17 Flying Fortresses on this mission. Eventually bomber losses decreased with the perfection of formation flying and the support of long-range fighters flying escort. Despite the losses, the Liberator bombers racked up an impressive 630,000 tons of bombs on strategic German targets and shoot-down of several thousand enemy aircraft.

The German anti-aircraft defenses were aware of the oncoming formation of bombers and focused their heavy fire so that the flak would be the thickest at the calculated point of release of the bombs by the attacking bombers. It was at this point of the attack when practically overhead of the intended target that the Southern Belle was struck by flak. Unfortunately, she had not yet released her bombs. The flak must have struck the Southern Belle amidships in the area

of the bomb bay thus creating a huge explosion. Technical Sergeant Harold Teague, an engineer on an adjacent aircraft reported that he observed “At 1125 hours, altitude 22,700 ft. [that the Southern Belle] blew up over the target as result of direct hit in bomb bay. Ball of flame and observed aircraft disintegrate. Tail turret and tailplane and wing blown off. No chutes.” The lives of those twelve men of the crew were quickly ended.



**P24-J Liberator heavy bomber illustration and map of the crash site near Vipitino (highlighted).**

“A/C #42-51989 Yellow “K” Seen to Explode”

What is not clearly understood is how the bodies of the crew members were to remain in the aircraft as it descended in flames more than 22,000 feet to Earth and eventually crashing across the border into Austria. The bodies of the crew were subsequently recovered by the Austrians and buried in a common grave in a churchyard in Oberburg, Austria.

## The Long Journey Home

In the late spring and into the summer of 1945, these dreaded headlines appeared in two dailies of Lincoln, Nebraska:

“Sgt Joe Stallings Missing Over Italy”	April 1945
“Sgt. J. Stalling [Stallings] Missing Over Italy”	May 3, 1945;
“Sgt. Joe Stallings is killed in action”	June 22, 1945;
“Sgt. Stallings Killed at Brenner Pass”	June 28, 1945;
“Killed in Action”	July 19, 1945.

The dailies carrying these headlines were The Lincoln Star, Lincoln Journal Star, Lincoln Farm and Home News and The Nebraska State Journal. Selected excerpts read:

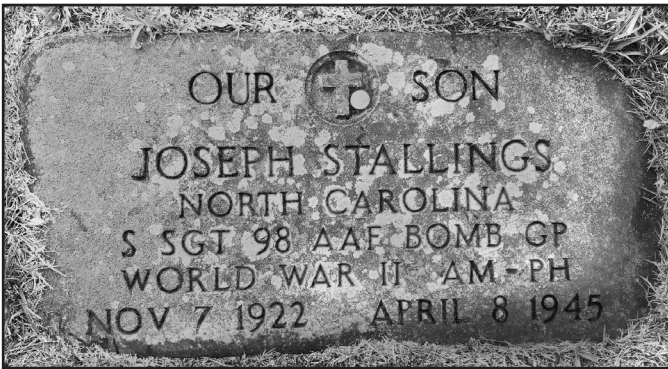
“Ball turret gunner on a B-24, with the 98<sup>th</sup> bombardment group, Sergeant Stallings was acting as aerial photographer on the April 8 mission ... at Brenner Pass, where a railroad was being bombarded. The plane on entering the flak area received a direct hit with its bombs still undischarged and was blown to bits...and all 12 men aboard were killed instantly...”

After Victory in Europe or V-E Day on May 8, 1945, the military took great efforts and devoted significant resources to locate, identify, and gather the remains of deceased members. As a result, the body of Staff Sergeant Stallings was quickly identified and “Disinterred from a common grave in churchyard at Oberburg, Austria, W-060-320...” on June 12, 1945. His remains were then transferred to Germany and reburied in the temporary U.S. military cemetery in Reutti, Germany. In 1946, his body disinterred again and reburied in the U.S. military cemetery at Saint-Avold, France (Cimetiere Militaire American de Saint-Avold, Plot T, Row 18, Grave 2800). This cemetery is also known as the Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial and located 23 miles east of Metz, France. Stallings’ father, was officially notified by letter dated October 15, 1946, regarding the burial location of his son.

On December 15, 1947, Disinterment Directive #357411487 directed that the remains of Staff Sergeant Joe Stallings be disinterred at Saint-Avold and shipped to Joe K. Willis Co., Funeral Director, 226 Broad Street, New Bern, NC. The name and address of next of kin is Durham H. Stallings (Father), 314 (55) Metcalf Street, New Bern, NC. The Disinterment Directive described the deceased wearing an “Air Force uniform,” and that the “Body [was] complete, disarticulated. Small amount of flesh, final stage of decomposition.” These remains were placed in a transfer box on August 31, 1948, and eventually sent then to the Stallings’ family home in New Bern.

Staff Sergeant Stallings was finally laid to rest in the Stallings Family Plot #1313 at the Cedar Grove Cemetery. The inscription on his grave marker reads:

**Our † Son**  
**JOSEPH STALLINGS**  
**NORTH CAROLINA**  
**S[Staff] SGT 98 AAF [Army Air Force] Bomb GP [Group]**  
**World War II AM [Air Medal] – PH [Purple Heart]**



The story of Staff Sergeant Joseph (Joe) Stallings would not be complete without remembering the valiant crew members with whom he served and died on that fateful mission.



<b>Crew Member</b>	<b>Home Town of Record</b>	<b>Burial Site</b>
1st Lt. Paul Charles Bent, Jr., Pilot	Roanoke, VA	France
1st Lt. William M. Conway, Co-Pilot	Fort Deposit, AL	UNK
1st Lt. David K, Boland, Navigator	Santa Monica, CA	France
1st Lt. Frederic P. Benfer, Bombardier	Des Moines, IA	Iowa
1st Lt. David A. Kuehl	Eau Clair, WI	France
Technical Sgt. Michael J. Kollar, Engineer	Jersey City, NJ	UNK
Sgt. Daniel W. Keogh, Radio Operator	Philadelphia, PA	PA
Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Musto, Nose Gunner	Yonkers, NY	CT
Sgt. Robert K. Jelinek, (“LN”)	Beloit, KS	KS
Sgt. Roy S. Horton, Ball Gunner	Dublin, VA	VA
Sgt. William G. Wright, Tail Gunner	Akron, OH	KY
Staff Sgt. Joseph Stallings, Camera	New Bern, NC	NC

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Missing Air Crew Report #2942313 and #13703, [www.fold3.com/image/#29424313](http://www.fold3.com/image/#29424313).

The Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln, NE, 22 Jun 1945, p. 1.

QMC Form 1194, Disinterment Directive for Staff Sergeant Joe Stallings, dated 15 Dec 1947.

Report of Reburial, TM 10-630 and AR 30-1815, 12 June 1945, changing unknown dead to Staff Sergeant Joe Stallings, previously “Unknown American X-85 (W-060-320)” in Grave No. 641.

“Sgt. Musto Killed As Flak Hits Bomb Bay Of His Liberator,” The Herald Statesman (Yonkers, NY), 18 Jun 1945, p. 1.

### **About the Author**

Steve Shaffer retired as a Lt. Colonel from the U.S. Air Force in 1981; from the Defense Intelligence Agency, and then from Booz, Allen, Hamilton. He holds a Bachelors of Arts from Franklin & Marshall College and a Masters of Arts in Oriental Studies (China) from the University of Arizona. He is the author of the book “The Order Book of Brigadier General Lawrence O’Bryan Branch, Confederate Army.”



## THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN NEW BERN

Susan Cook

In August 1920, North Carolina had the chance to make history. One final state was needed to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment that would give American women the right to vote. Suffragists were hopeful ours would be that state, the thirty-sixth state. Instead, the senate avoided the issue by postponing consideration until the following year. The next day Tennessee voted yes, ensuring that voting rights could not be “denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

Resistance to woman suffrage was strong throughout the South. In North Carolina, resistance was strongest in the eastern part of the state, Craven County, where a significant percentage of the population was rural and black. In 1900, the county population was 62.4 percent rural and 60.2 percent nonwhite. By 1920, the ratios remained relatively unchanged, 58 percent rural and 52.3 percent nonwhite. Despite these demographics an organized suffrage group was formed in New Bern. Here, as in most of the state, the approach was circumspect and nonmilitant.

Ideologies and values affecting opinions on woman suffrage included states’ rights issues and deeply held beliefs about the sanctity of women and their status and role in the family. Much of the opposition was also clearly related to race and protection of white supremacy.

### Early Days

*The Revolution* (a woman’s rights newspaper) printed a letter in 1870 that contained a surprising mention of New Bern with the writer saying “many sympathizers are there”, and you may “now and then find one who has the moral courage to advocate the cause.” Lack of local newspaper coverage, however, suggests that support here was limited or simply not a pressing concern.

Possibly the first mention in a local paper appeared in 1887 with the observation that “cranky women” were still “hammering away” for the right of suffrage, and “a large number of these cranks” had forced the U.S. Senate to give them a hearing. This very early version of the Nineteenth Amendment was soundly defeated. Both North Carolina senators Zebulon Vance and Matt W. R. Ransom voted against it.

The NC Equal Suffrage Association (NCESA) was formed in Asheville in 1894. Five years later it succeeded in bringing a woman suffrage amendment before the state senate. The senate leader referred the bill to the committee on insane asylums. New Bern papers had one comment: “the subject meets with but little tolerance in this state.” The NCESA became more active in 1913 when it became associated with the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Nevertheless, disdain continued as late as 1912 when one rural letter writer observed that it would be “a shame to low them to the ballot box. They are clare of all publick duties now. So, I don’t think they have any more business to vote than a hog. Please publish this to let people know how I stand on it.” The writer was later identified as a “hard shell Baptist farmer.”

### **Progressive Era 1880s-1921**

However, changes did come including: a growth in the middle class; increased urbanization; and interest in reforms such as improved education and more humane labor laws. These, along with the temperance movement and women’s efforts in World War I (1914-1918) helped pave the way for a more active role for women outside the home. The image of the ideal southern lady on a pedestal was slowly yielding to the “new woman.” More women were acquiring some higher education and paid work experiences. The ground was being laid for women to help shape public policy. For many women this included woman suffrage. By 1913, a New Bern columnist observed that he believed woman suffrage support is so low because “the women have not made up their minds. It is possible that what is now a small minority may grow into a large majority.”

On March 3, 1913 (the day before Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration), the famous Woman Suffrage Procession took place in

Washington. More than five thousand women with floats, bands and horse brigades moved along Pennsylvania Avenue in a procession organized by the NAWSA. This first major national event for woman suffrage is considered the beginning of the final round in the fight for the vote. Only one woman from North Carolina is known to have marched. And according to one report, no one could be found from North Carolina to carry the NAWSA banner.

Nevertheless, the NC Federation of Women's Clubs held their annual meeting in New Bern. Surprisingly, State Supreme Court Chief Justice Walter McKenzie Clark was invited to speak. Justice Clark was known as one of the most outspoken state advocates for women's rights. While acknowledging that the majority of North Carolina women did not yet desire equal suffrage, he outlined the reasons for his support. The paper reported positive reactions: "An ovation was given him by a rising audience after which . . . question after question pounded the Judge from the floor." Despite this enthusiastic response, no Woman's Club endorsement was forthcoming, out of "respect to the many who believed in it but thought the time for action had not come."

### **North Carolina Equal Suffrage League**

With the changing times and attention generated by the Washington parade, the movement was revitalized with the formation of the North Carolina Equal Suffrage League (NCESL) in 1913. The League approach was to "arouse interest without arousing opposition and to gain the vote by an appeal to reason and fair play." Members were to promote "a nonmilitant organization that presented no threat to the stability of the home or society." Within a year, statewide membership had reached 210. By the end of 1917 the association boasted 1,000 members.

The formative year for New Bern was 1914. According to NCESL meeting minutes from December 1913, Mrs. George Green of New Bern was present and became state recording secretary. In January 1914, the New Bern Daily Journal announced that a local group has been informally connecting and would soon formalize the organization. Board minutes of 1914 listed New Bern as one of the

state groups and listed New Bernian Mrs. Lalyce Duffy Buford as the state executive board secretary. No minutes or membership lists from the local group are extant, but meeting announcements and notes appear in the local newspapers somewhat regularly through October 1920. These provide information about some of the activities along with some member names.

In April 1914 a national leader came to New Bern to promote the cause. The press announced that she was also a member of the Maryland Woman's Club, and all club women of New Bern were especially urged to hear her. Mention is made of the prospective speaker's knowledge and cleverness and also her "personal charm and womanliness." After the talk, when asked for a show of hands, only three women went on record as being opposed to votes for women. A later editorial in the paper, though, speculates that this limited opposition was due to the charm of the speaker rather than actual member beliefs.

The next month an outdoor film program at Ghent Park included a plug for suffrage with the showing of an episode of the popular national series "Our Mutual Girl." Our mutual girl was featured in a weekly adventure series in which she regularly meets famous or politically important figures. In this episode she encounters a famous suffragette. The message is that professional women can be young and feminine and also be involved with causes including woman suffrage.

In 1914, the Daily Journal announced that the local League would be contributing informational articles from time to time and readers were encouraged to take note of them. "If you are not avowedly against the movement you will naturally be open to conviction, and the ladies are desirous of convincing you." That December the group collected signatures and petitioned US Senator Furnifold Simmons asking for his support. Forty signatures had been collected including several from "the most prominent men in town." Senator Simmons, who was born in Pollocksville and maintained a home in New Bern, was not convinced.

In one stirring letter from early 1915, Mrs. Buford reminds readers that the NC Constitution states that "all political power is

vested in and derived from the people, founded upon their will only, and is instituted for the good of the whole.” She asks “Can anyone say that women are not part of the people? They are entitled to the vote and should not be reduced to beggary in an attempt to obtain what is already theirs by right.” A similar letter had appeared locally when she asked “men of chivalry where are you?” That same year the paper reported that the local league under the capable leadership of Mrs. Buford is “fast growing, both in membership and influence.” The article also noted that the group would sponsor a “public debate at which time the question will be: ‘Resolved that Equal Suffrage would be beneficial to all women but especially so to the self-supporting women.’”

In 1915 NCESL did succeed in getting a state level suffrage bill introduced simultaneously in both houses of the NC General Assembly. Although the bill was defeated, the hearing was “packed to overflowing” and generated statewide attention. Mrs. Buford was there to observe the vote. Both New Bern’s State Senator Alfred D. Ward and Representative Gilbert A. W. Whitford voted against it. Much of the opposition was racially motivated. Anti-suffragists feared that giving women the vote would lead to a reversal of the disenfranchisement laws of 1900 that limited African American voting.

After defeat of the bill, the League focused its efforts on a national amendment. Then in April 1917 the United States entered World War I. As women took on jobs vacated by soldiers, public perspectives on women’s voting rights began to shift. Suffragists argued that women should be rewarded for their wartime service and pointed out a disconnect between fighting for democracy abroad while denying voting rights to women at home.

The idea of woman suffrage was becoming more acceptable. In a December 1917 column in the *Morning New Bernian*, for example, the editor wrote strongly that woman suffrage is “so favorable that its enactment should be nationwide.” Finally, as public opinion continued to change, a suffrage amendment was introduced in both houses of Congress. At this point the influential General Federation of Women’s Clubs was ready to throw in their support. Members quickly endorsed the amendment and sent a telegram of support to NC

Senators Simmons and Lee S. Overman. The amendment passed the Senate on June 4, 1919. Simmons and Overman both voted against it. It passed the House in May 21, 1919. New Bern District Congressman Samuel Brinson voted against it.

## Ratification

NC Governor Bickett called a special session of the General Assembly in the summer of 1920 to consider the proposed amendment. Prior to the session, state suffragists stepped up their efforts with national organizers coming in to lend a hand. The state NCSL president wrote members: "The time has come when we must put our shoulders to the wheel. ... THINK RATIFICATION, talk ratification, work for ratification. Make North Carolina the PERFECT 36."

<p><b>WOMAN SUFFRAGE MASS MEETING AT COURTHOUSE SOON</b></p> <p>Rally in Interest of Susan B. Anthony Amendment is Scheduled For Next Week</p> <p>The members of the Equal Suffrage League of NEW BERN, assisted by some of the men of the city, who believe in this cause, are planning for a big ratification meeting on Tuesday, June 15, in Craven county court house.</p> <p>The chief speakers will be people from out of town, but many NEW BERN people will be ready to express their views on the subject.</p> <p>The first object of the meeting is to give voice to some of the reasons why suffragists believe that giving the ballot to women will be beneficial both to the women and to the country; and, second, to say that NEW BERN wants North Carolina to ratify the Susan B. Anthony amendment.</p>
<p><b>New Bern Journal</b></p> <p>June 9, 1920, p.1</p>


The New Bern League did go to work. News notes and announcements appeared in the papers throughout the spring and summer. The group, "assisted by some of the men who believe in this cause," held a mass meeting at the court house in June. The paper carried an article fiercely in support of the suffrage amendment. Another plea for "justice for women" appeared later. The New Bern Woman's Club lent its name to the appeal for a rally: "Every woman in Craven County who has at heart the interests of Democracy is urged to attend a joint meeting of the Equal Suffrage League and Woman's clubs of the city of New Bern ... An urgent invitation to every man is extended."

At Raleigh headquarters the League turned to prominent men across the state to show their support. Three men from New Bern agreed to serve on an advisory board and allow their names to appear on broadsides distributed throughout the state. These men were Charles L. Abernathy, Caleb D. Bradham, and Judge O.H. Guion.



## The Anti's

Concern about ratification led to an organized and powerful anti-suffrage effort which had not seemed necessary in the past. By the summer of 1920, a state branch of the Southern Rejection

<p><b>Vote <u>NO</u></b> <b><u>on Woman Suffrage</u></b></p> <p>BECAUSE 90% of the women either do not want it, or <i>de mai cure</i>.</p> <p>BECAUSE it means <i>competitiveness</i> of women with men instead of <i>co-operation</i>.</p> <p>BECAUSE 80% of the women eligible to vote are married and can only double or annul their husbands' votes.</p> <p>BECAUSE it can be of no benefit commensurate with the additional expense involved.</p> <p>BECAUSE in some States more voting women than voting men will place the Government under petticoat rule.</p> <p>BECAUSE it is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur.</p>	<p><i>dupl</i></p> <p><b>Household Hints</b></p>  <p><b>National Association OPPOSED to Woman Suffrage</b></p> <p>Headquarters 252 Madison Avenue New York, N. Y.</p> <p>Branch 726 Fourteenth Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.</p> <p>Votes of Women can accomplish no more than votes of Men. Why waste time, energy and money, without result?</p>
<p><b>National Association OPPOSED to Women Suffrage pamphlet, circa 1910s</b></p>	

League was formed in Raleigh. Raleigh men also organized the States Rights Defense League. Prominent New Bernian Romulus Nunn agreed to serve on their executive board and allow the use of his name in print. Both of these anti groups reflected the influence of business and the strength of opposition in eastern North Carolina.

The antis prevailed. Despite the vigorous campaign by the NCSL, NC politicians were not ready to approve the suffrage amendment. Even after Tennessee voted yes, the General Assembly met again to reconsider and rejected it, arguing that votes for women would threaten the sanctity of the home, states' rights and white supremacy. The thought is that legislators had nothing to gain nationally and did not want to alienate the anti-suffragette feeling at home by voting yes. As observed by Milton Ready in *The Tar Heel State*, "... an entrenched and seemingly threatened patriarchy found it could not tolerate women voting." North Carolina did not ratify the Nineteenth Amendment until a meaningless ceremonial vote in 1971.



**The Stewart sisters, from right to left,  
Sarah, Catherine, Jane and Maude.  
Circa 1920.**

(Courtesy of Tom Frauenberry Collection).

## **Remember the Women**

The passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 was unquestionably one of the great turning points in American history. The names of New Bern women known to have been members of NCESL are listed below along with the first date each name was mentioned. These women were not famous. They were not national or state leaders. They were not political leaders. They were ordinary women who were extraordinary. They worked in their community to make life better. City beautification, street cleaning, better schools, improved child labor laws, higher teacher salaries, temperance, eliminating

tuberculosis were some of their causes. They were frivolous. They enjoyed teas, bridge, bridal showers, dancing at cotillions. They were mothers, sisters, and wives. And they cared about women. They gave their time and energy to advance women's recognition as full citizens. Read their names and honor them.

NAME	DATE	OFFICER
Mrs. Lalyce Duffy Buford	1914	State secretary
Mrs. S. L. Dill, Jr.	1915	State membership committee
Mrs. Clyde Eby	1915	State finance committee
Mrs. F.E. Engstrum	1920	Local president
Mrs. George Green	1913	State recording secretary
Mrs. Nixon	1920	
Miss Jane Stewart	1914	Local president
Mrs. John Washington Stewart	1916	
Miss Sarah Louise Stewart	1914	
Miss Bettie Dunn Windley	1920	3rd District ratification chair
Miss Bettie Dunn Windley	1920	2nd. Vice president, state
Mrs. M.O. Windley	1914	Local secretary

### **The Rest of the Story**

In addition to the women listed above, other New Bern women must have participated in this great leap forward. In time perhaps more names will be identified and honored. Also, NCESL membership was limited to White women only, and this article focuses only on the White community. It includes nothing about suffrage advocacy among Black women. Sarah Dudley Pettey was one such woman who advocated for voting rights. Her story has been told, but others remain and further research is needed.

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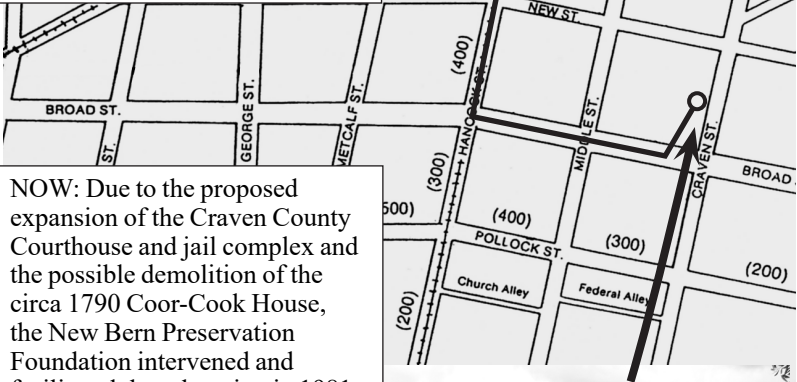
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## New Bern Then and Now

**THEN:** Located on the southwest corner of Hancock and Johnson Streets and constructed in 1904, the Moses Griffin Building was designed to accommodate the newly-expanded high school curriculum. When the high school relocated to a new facility in 1955, the downtown campus including the Moses Griffin Building was named Central Elementary School consisting of grades 1-8. Sadly, the building was demolished circa 1979.



**NOW:** Due to the proposed expansion of the Craven County Courthouse and jail complex and the possible demolition of the circa 1790 Coor-Cook House, the New Bern Preservation Foundation intervened and facilitated the relocation in 1981 of the house located on the west side of the 400 block of Craven Street to the site that had been previously occupied by the Moses Griffin Building. The Coor-Cook House and its office dependency have been meticulously restored and maintained with exceptional stewardship.



## 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
- New Bern History Quest
- 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

## The Formation of Craven and other Eastern North Carolina Counties

Information provided herein was gathered from the publication “The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943” by David Leroy Corbitt, State Department of Archives and History, published in 1950.

Craven was first called Archdale, the name being changed about 1712. It was named in honor of William, Lord Craven, one of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina. It is in the eastern section of the state and is bounded by Carteret, Jones, Lenoir, Pitt, Beaufort, and Pamlico counties. The present area is 725 square miles, and the 1950 population is 31,298. The county seat was first called Chattawka, or Chattoocka, and later, in 1723, New Bern—the law fixed the spelling in 1897—is the county seat.

- Carteret was formed in 1722 from Craven
- New Hanover was formed in 1729 from Craven
- Johnston was formed in 1746 from Craven
- Part of Beaufort was annexed to Craven in 1757
- Part of Craven was annexed to Dobbs in 1764
- Jones was formed in 1778 from Craven
- Part of Craven was annexed to Lenoir in 1798
- Part of Craven was annexed to Greene in 1801
- Part of Beaufort was annexed to Craven in 1801
- Part of Craven was annexed to Lenoir in 1804
- Part of Craven was annexed to Lenoir in 1819
- Pamlico County was formed in 1872 from Craven and Beaufort
- Part of Craven was annexed to Pamlico County in 1875