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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a semiannual publication of the New Bern Historical Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the rich heritage of New Bern. Articles, letters, photographs, and memorabilia relevant to the history of New Bern and Craven County may be submitted to the editor for review. (Post Office Box 119, New Bern, North Carolina 28563)

ALFRED AUSTELL CUNNINGHAM
The Man Who Loved to Fly

Lynn Alta Lonergan

It is now called Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, but when it was commissioned, the name was Cunningham Field. According to Alan D. Watson, in 1942 it was named for "Lieutenant General Alfred A. Cunningham, the first marine officer to become a naval aviator". Robert Sherrod has a slightly different story. Cunningham was, in fact, the first Marine aviator, but he retired physically as a major in 1935 and was promoted to lieutenant colonel on the retired list in 1936. Cunningham Field was dedicated on 4 September 1941. In researching Cunningham, few facts are available, and those found often conflict.

Cunningham also had a ship named for him. Department of the Navy documents list destroyer ALFRED A. CUNNINGHAM (DD-752) as having been launched on 3 August 1944 and commissioned on 23 November 1944. The ship was awarded seven battle stars: one for service in World War II and the others for operations during the Korean conflict. Danny J. Crawford, Head, Reference Section, History and Museums Division of Headquarters, Marine Corps, writes that "the ship was decommissioned 24 February 1971, struck from the register 1 February 1979, and sunk as a target on 12 October 1979".

Locally, Cunningham's memory is perpetuated in the Trent River Bridge which was named for the aviator in 1978. Cunningham Boulevard runs on Cherry Point and changes to Cunningham Drive in Havelock. The Marine Corps Air Museum

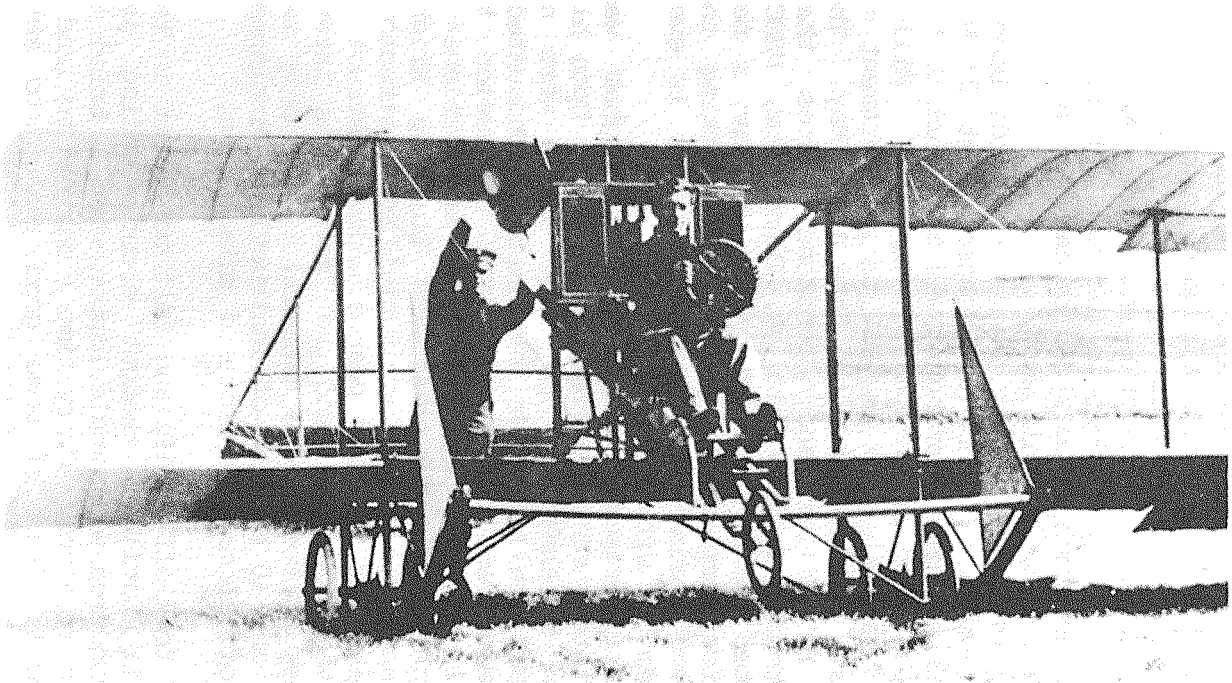
proposed for Havelock will also bear his name.

So who was Cunningham? Alfred Austell Cunningham was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on 8 March 1882. Although there are many facts of Cunningham's life in dispute, Sherrod, Johnson, and Millett do agree about his early years. Cunningham began his military career in the Army as a teenage Volunteer during the Spanish-American War. After leaving the Army he became a realtor in Georgia and developed a passion for flying when he rode as a passenger in a balloon. The year was 1903, and the Wrights were flying for the first time, too. Six years later Cunningham was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps, finishing fourth in his class at Marine Officers' School. He spent two years on battleships and at various shore stations before being promoted to first lieutenant. It was 1911, and Cunningham was on the verge of making history.

Cunningham's next duty station was the Marine Barracks at Philadelphia where he proceeded to make a name for himself in more ways than one. Desperate to fly, he spent $25 of his $167 monthly pay to rent a "plane" from a local inventor. Named "Noisy Nan" by his friends, the pusher-type contraption never did fly. Although he convinced Rear Admiral Grant, Commandant of the Yard, to let him use part of the field, Cunningham never did accomplish more than brief hops. His efforts included building a ramp to bounce "Nan" into the air but, as he later wrote,

> I called her everything in God's name to go up. I pleaded with her. I caressed her, I prayed to her, and I cursed that flighty old maid to lift up her skirts and hike, but she never would.

Cunningham did not allow this small setback to dampen his enthusiasm for flight, and he



FIRST LIEUTENANT ALFRED A. CUNNINGHAM (REAR) CRANKS UP PROPELLER ON "NOISY NAN". USMC photo.

joined the pioneering Aero Club. He proceeded to lobby his fellow members--many of whom were prominent--for a Marine air base in their city. Philadelphia had birthed the Corps; it should do the same for Marine aviation. "Noisy Nan" did not fly, and Philadelphia did not get its air field, but Cunningham's desire had been noticed, and in 1912 he got his wish.

It is at this point that the records become fuzzy again. Caidin and Johnson list 22 May 1912 as the date Cunningham was to report to the Aviation Camp at Annapolis, Maryland. Miller and Johnstone's book as well as a Department of the Navy document have the date as 25 May. The book by Miller and Johnstone states that "Lieutenant Arthur [sic] A. Cunningham, USMC, reported for aviation duty at the Navy's new aviation camp at Annapolis" thus marking the birth of Marine Corps aviation. Kane is even further off with a date of 9 July.

After reporting in May, Cunningham was immediately sent away for two months. Upon his return to Annapolis, he found there were no aircraft available for instruction. Undaunted, he requested and was granted permission to travel to the Burgess Company at Marblehead, Massachusetts. Burgess was building Wright seaplanes, and there were civilian instructors available as well as planes. But instruction time was expensive, and the factory was intent on keeping costs to a minimum. After only two hours and 40 minutes of instruction, Cunningham took off alone. He wrote of this flight,

> I took off safely and felt confident in the air until I thought about landing and wondered what would happen when I tried to do it alone. Every time I decided to land I would think of some good reason to make another circle of the bay.

When did he solo? According to Kane and

Simmons, on 1 August 1912. Padden and Mersky cite 20 August. The definitive answer seems to be in FORTITUDINE, quoting a note in Cunningham's handwriting that "his first solo was on 20 August 1912".

Then there is the question of the plane. Simmons and a Marine Corps document describe the aircraft as a Curtiss seaplane while Mersky and Padden's books indicate it was a Wright seaplane. What is agreed on is Cunningham's designation as Marine Corps aviator number one and Naval aviator number five.

Marine Corps aviation was off the ground but in for a bumpy ride. The B-1, like the other Wright planes, performed miserably. Cunningham's plane had been wrecked and rebuilt several times before he took it over and rebuilt it again. In his efforts to coax flight time out of it, he tried new carburetors, magnetos, fuel lines, propellors, and anything else suggested. He made over 400 flights in it but logged only five hours in the air in a three-month period. Cunningham complained that "in spite of unusual care by myself and my men, something seems to vibrate loose or off on a majority of the flights made". He writes to the Corps, "Lieutenant Arnold, of the Army, after seeing the machine run and examining it, said that none of the Army flyers would go up in it".

It was not long before Cunningham had a problem with another lady, his fiancée Josephine. The year was 1913, and she adamantly refused to marry a madman whose vocation and avocation kept him in the air. Mersky and Padden report that Cunningham requested detachment from flight duty in order to marry. Eighteen months later he was able to have both his beloved wife and his beloved flying. He requested a return to flight status in April 1915 and reported to Pensacola for refresher training.

By the end of 1915 Josephine's fears were

proven to be true. Although some details are muddled, Cunningham did attempt a catapult takeoff from the deck of the USS NORTH CAROLINA. The attempt failed, and his AB-2 seaplane wrecked. Padden reports that the wreck occurred "toward the end of 1915" and that "Cunningham luckily suffered only a back injury" when his aircraft flipped over into the sea. Heatley also has the date as 1915 but writes that "the plane stalled, turned over, and fell to the deck, breaking Cunningham's back". Sherrod pinpoints the date as 10 November 1915, and states that Cunningham's "back was injured when the Curtiss crashed into the sea". Van Deurs concurs that the plane hit the water but writes, "a boat fished Cunningham out, unhurt". Mersky and Johnson agree on a date of 8 November 1916 for the aborted attempt which ended with the plane in the water and Cunningham sustaining a serious back injury. He returned to active duty several months after the wreck, whatever the date.

First Lieutenant Cunningham's next assignment was less hazardous but just as challenging. He was directed in February 1917 to organize an Aviation Company at the Philadelphia Navy Yard with the contingent of five Marine pilots. By April 1917 Captain Cunningham was organizing the Marine Aeronautic Company with personnel transferred from Pensacola and the Marine Corps Reserve Flying Corps. His recruiting efforts included Marines from the officers' school, civilian pilots and instructors, and Navy seaplane pilots he convinced to disenroll and join the Marines. The latter was a highly successful campaign, as over half of the Marine aviators who later fought in Europe were transferred Navy officers. Johnson tells of one Marine pilot who referred to the volunteers as "strays that Cunningham . . . picked up".

Captain Cunningham's next move was to Europe. In November 1917 he flew to France anxious for a way to get his men and their

LIEUTENANT ALFRED A. CUNNINGHAM (1882-1939). USMC photo.

machines into combat. During his ten-week tour of the front he kept a diary which reflects many of the same problems recently experienced by our troops in the Persian Gulf. He remarks in Paris, "It is strange, but we hear less about what is happening in the war than they do in the States". Our shipboard troops, especially, complained because we had CNN and they did not. And mail was just as important then as now. On Thanksgiving Day Cunningham writes,

> I have been as blue as indigo all day. I had banked on getting some letters today and went to the Embassy full of expectation. There was not a single letter for me. I could hardly believe it.

He continues,

> There are thousands of Americans who, like me, have someone at home they love and a letter from them means everything and still by inefficiency they delay the mail a month. This is a worse hardship than the fighting.

Only a few months later, he returned to France with the First Marine Aviation Force. Unfortunately, the aircraft he had been promised did not arrive on schedule. Temporarily promoted to major, the ever resourceful Cunningham made a deal with the British who had more aircraft than they did pilots. It was not until October when their own equipment arrived that his squadrons took to the air on their own. Mersky reports that by the date of the armistice, the First Marine Aviation Force "had flown forty-three missions with the RAF, besides fourteen of their own, and had accounted for four German fighters". Cunningham arranged for a quick return of the Force to the States to begin "getting our Aviation service established under the new conditions of peace".

His post-war battles for Marine aviation were also hard-fought. From 17 November 1919 until 12 December 1920 he served as Officer-in-Charge, Aviation, for the Corps. A visionary even then, Cunningham felt

> that the only excuse for aviation in any service is its usefulness in assisting the troops on the ground to successfully carry out their operations.

The reality of his vision has just been seen in the Persian Gulf. In 1920 Marine aviation became a permanent part of the Corps with a strength of 1020 Marines and the authority to establish permanent air stations.

Sadly, Cunningham was not able to lead Marine aviation past 1920. He was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Turner, who outranked him, having made the permanent rank of major in 1917. Cunningham did not receive his permanent promotion to major until 1921. Following a policy he helped to define, that of alternating ground and flight assignments, Cunningham returned to ground duty in 1922. In 1928 he asked to be returned to flight status but was refused. He finished his career with various ground duties after commanding Marine aviation in Santo Domingo. Cunningham retired in 1935 and died four years later in Sarasota, Florida, survived by Josephine. He is buried in the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia, and was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame in 1965.

Alfred Cunningham sums up his contribution to Marine aviation in a letter to Major General John Archer Lejeune contained in Johnson's book:

> I was the first Marine officer to fly and spent the best years of my career working with enthusiasm to advance Marine Corps aviation. I did the unappreciated pio-

neering work and stuck by it during the time when no one considered it important enough to be desirable duty, paying the usual toll which pioneering demands.

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THE MARINE CORPS AIR STATION AT CHERRY POINT
The Early Years

Audrey Mellevold

Editor's note: The fiftieth anniversary of the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point will be observed in 1992. This is the first of a two-part series on the history of the air station.

Thirty-eight years after Wilbur and Orville Wright flew for the first time at Kitty Hawk, eastern North Carolina became the birthplace of a United States Marine Corps Air Station. The main field was originally named Cunningham Field for Lieutenant Colonel Alfred A. Cunningham, the first Marine officer to become a Naval aviator. According to contemporary newspapers, Marines were on duty in coastal North Carolina as early as 1777. Taking into consideration its proximity to water and its mild weather, it was reasonable that the United States Marine Corps might locate what would become its most important and largest air station on the shores of the Old North State.

In 1941 it was evident that facilities at Quantico, Virginia, were inadequate, and the federal government began searching the southeast for a site to locate another ground and air station. On 15 February of that year a committee on Naval affairs met to consider a bill (H. R. 3155) to authorize construction of a Marine Air Station.

The following is selected from the bill:

> After detailed reconnaissance by a Board of Marine Officers of various areas along the

> Atlantic and Gulf Coasts between Norfolk, Virginia and Corpus Christi, Texas, it was determined that the areas in the vicinity of the New River and Neuse River in North Carolina were the only ones which would meet the necessary requirements.

Initially the location of the station was to have been on the north side of the Neuse River in Pamlico County near Wilkinson Point. Access to ground transportation between the air station and Camp Lejeune east of Jacksonville and the seaport at Morehead City influenced the decision to locate the air station on the south side of the Neuse between Slocum Creek and Hancock Creek--nearly opposite the Pamlico County site.

> The Neuse River site thirty-five miles north east of the proposed divisional combat areas has been selected. The area is ample in size and will have land and seaplane facilities with miles of coastal area for gunnery practice, enjoys excellent mild weather and is located where possibilities for outlying fields are unlimited. The section is located on a sunshine map as one of three areas in the United States having the greatest amount of annual sunshine--an important factor in an airbase.

There were, however, two bad features noted in the bill: "Cherry Point is located in the path of most Atlantic seaboard storms, so special plane hurricane evacuation plans were drawn up". The second bad feature was "the presence of Malarial Mosquitos due to the swamps". The United States Navy Medical Corps initiated control projects which eliminated the latter problem but not before a sign was posted on one of the temporary buildings which read, "Don't keep 'em flying". One of the medical officers was said to have spent much of his time

in hip boots in the swampland where, while seeking out mosquitos, he came upon a 10½ foot long alligator dug from the muck.

The name "Cherry Point" was attributed to a post office established in the area for the Blades lumber business. The post office was closed in 1935. The "point" was east of Hancock Creek, and the word "cherry" came from the cherry trees which once thrived there.

Representative Graham A. Barden, Congressman from the Third District of North Carolina, was one of the most influential civilian officials in helping plan the air station and its construction at Cherry Point. He is given much credit for his advice, cooperation, and legislative influence in getting the enormous building programs underway.

On 18 February 1941 the United States Congress authorized expenditure of $25 million for Marine Aviation Facilities at Neuse River, North Carolina. This was to "include all land purchases, construction of all buildings and acquisitions and improvement of outlying fields".

Following congressional approval, condemnation proceedings were initiated, and a "Declaration of Taking" was filed in District Court, Eastern District, New Bern, North Carolina, on 26 September 1941 for 7,582.2 acres of land--forest, farmland, and swamps. One Havelock resident observed that the woods in that area were filled with liquor stills and old half-gallon bottles. Two white families and 40 black families residing on the property found housing elsewhere under the guidance of the Farm Security Administration. The purchase price of the land amounted to $104,869.

On 8 August 1941 the firm of T. A. Loving & Associates, which had just completed a large project at Fort Bragg, was awarded a $14 million contract. Every type of construction was needed for the Cherry Point job. In addition to

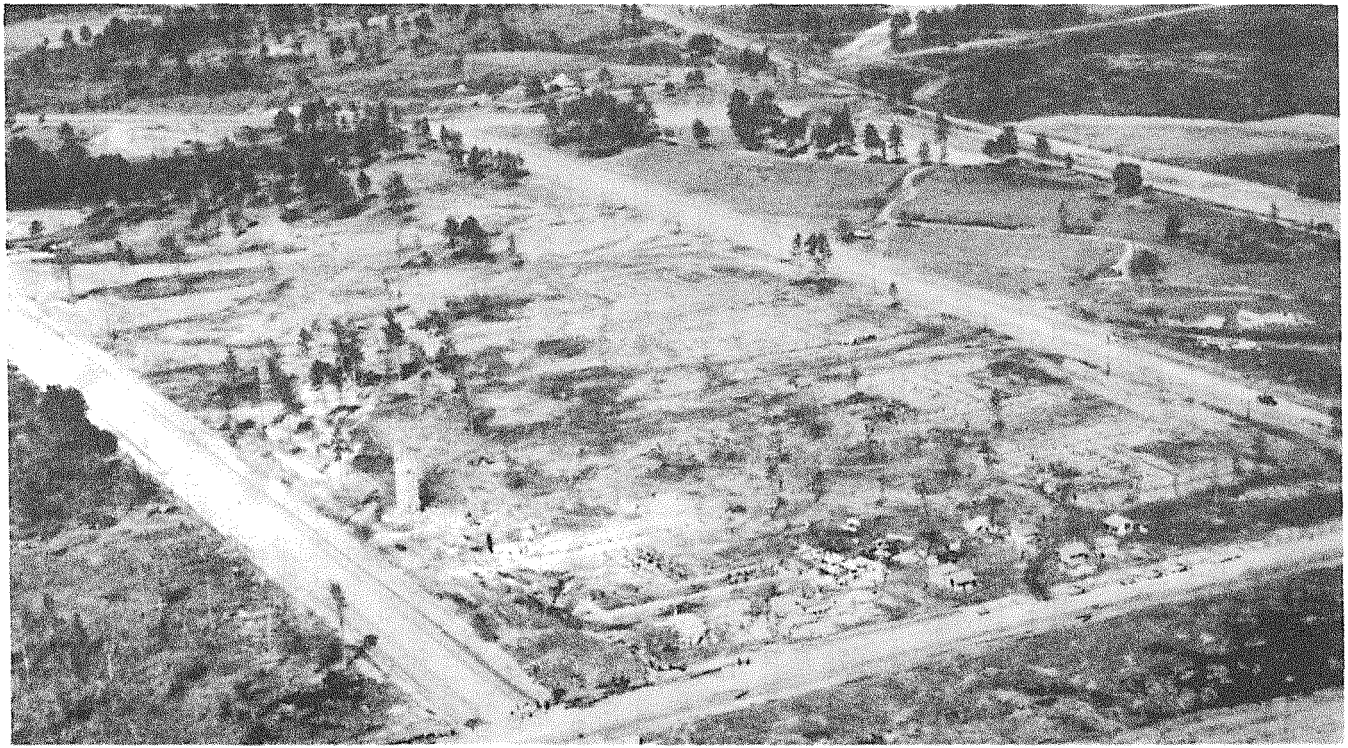
barracks, mess halls, and officer's quarters, there would be a water treatment plant, a power plant, a disposal plant, steam distribution system, two hangars, hospital, recreation building, and, of course, runways. Everything needed for a self-supporting city was required in addition to facilities for the military operations. An assembly and repair shop (now known as NADEP) was dedicated on 4 December 1943 by Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

On 18 August 1941 an organization known as "Air Facilities Under Development at Cherry Point" was established. That same day offices were moved from the Queen Ann Hotel on Broad Street in New Bern and set up in the new United States Post Office on Middle Street. On 3 September the offices were moved to Aviation Facilities at Cherry Point, where a frame building had been built in only eight days. When the first commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Cushman, U. S. M. C., reported for duty on 18 August, his strength of command consisted of four enlisted men.

Although clearing of the vast expanse of swampland began on 6 August 1941, construction of runways for the air field did not start until November, just 17 days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Once the United States entered the war, construction stepped up considerably: ten-hour days and seven-day work weeks were inaugurated for several thousand laborers, utilizing both day and night shifts.

Two days after Japan's attack two platoons of the 14th Marine Provisional Company, New River, North Carolina, reported for guard duty at Cherry Point. Some lived in temporary barracks; others were housed in New Bern and rode to and from the station in contractors' trucks.

The construction of the air station and its outlying fields was one of the largest building



LOOKING ACROSS C STREET AND FOURTH AVENUE TOWARD BARRACKS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN 1941. USN photo.

projects undertaken during World War II. There were 8,000 civilians employed during the peak of construction. Because of the rural location there was tremendous difficulty in transporting personnel to and from their homes. The two nearest cities, New Bern and Morehead City, were each 20 miles from the station. The highway system was inadequate, and it was necessary to stagger the working hours of personnel to permit traffic to flow. Construction workers in the immediate area were scarce, not only because large numbers of men had been called to active duty, but, because this was farm country, there were no skilled laborers. So rural was the vicinity, there was only one store in all of Havelock--a general merchandise country store owned and operated by the Trader family.

With the exception of the Seashore Transportation Company of New Bern, no bus companies served the community, nor was there any interest in doing so. Yet nearly one-third of the workers lived more than 50 miles from the construction site. Many lived several miles from the main highway. Finally the local Office of Price Administration (OPA) solved the problem: a rationing board was set up at the job site to handle distribution of gasoline and tires, assuring every employee a ride to and from work.

Transportation of building material was equally difficult. The nearest trunk line railroad was located at Goldsboro, 70 miles west of the station. From there the Atlantic and East Carolina Railroad originated and ran to Morehead City. The line, known as the "Old Mullet Line" for its frequent cargo of fish from down east, could not support heavy traffic, and the road bed was in such poor condition that the maximum speed of the train was 15 miles per hour. The state of North Carolina and the federal government each funded $200,000 to upgrade the line to Kinston and on toward Morehead City. Most important, traffic was

accelerated to 50 miles per hour.

Partial operation of the station had been scheduled for March of 1942, but because of the amount of important material required for the central heating plant, the plant could not be operable in time to meet the construction schedule. The contractor brought in a railroad locomotive, parked it near the barracks building, and connected it to the underground steam distribution system. In this manner heat and hot water was supplied to the buildings about to be occupied.

Until May of 1942 when the first runway opened at Cherry Point, planes were kept on the grassy fields at New Bern and other outlying fields located in Beaufort, Greenville, Washington, and Wilson. In addition there were sites acquired by purchase or lease for Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Fields in Atlantic, Bogue, Oak Grove, Kinston, Camp Lejeune, and Congaree, South Carolina. The municipal airport at New Bern was temporarily used by the United States Army Air Force by permission of Marine Headquarters and known as Mitchell Field.

By June of 1942--just seven months after construction had begun--Lieutenant Colonel Cushman announced the following:

> One navy and two army squadrons based there temporarily; twelve barracks buildings were completed, ten were still under construction; two mess halls were completed; the strength of organization consisted of forty-five Marine Corps officers and five hundred eighty-four enlisted men; twenty-one Naval officers and one hundred thirty enlisted men; two Army bombardment squadrons, thirty-four Army officers and one hundred thirty enlisted men; four runways had been completed and the operation and control tower was almost operable; the first seaplane hangar was completed; fifty sets of

officers quarters were completed and three hundred sets of non com officers quarters were in use.

During the crucial days of 1943-1944 almost half of all the men in Marine aviation were stationed at Cherry Point.

The first women Marines reported for duty in May 1943. There were 18 in that initial contingent, which relieved men for combat duty. Some continued their vocations as stenographers, secretaries, or telephone operators. Others learned to overhaul airplane engines or packed ammunition, but they were most in demand in the air control tower.

Air traffic control was a real problem. All aircraft had different speeds of approach, and a turning radius had to be taken into account. A system was devised that all aircraft approach the field at 1500 feet, make a left turn only within a radius of three miles of the field, then pass over a point in the center of the field parallel with one particular runway. At that point a landing sequence was determined, and no aircraft was permitted to pass another until the landing was complete.

The Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point had rapidly become a primary training center for Marine aviators, and an experienced group of instructors was assembled to train young fliers for the war.

In November 1942 the Third Marine Aircraft Wing was organized under the command of Lieutenant Colonel C. R. Freeman. This wing went overseas when its training was complete. The Ninth Marine Aircraft Wing was formed under the command of Colonel C. F. Schilt in April 1944. This wing was created for individual or group combat replacement.

From the small nucleus of personnel noted by Lieutenant Colonel Cushman in June of 1942 the military personnel at the main air station grew

to 20,000 during the later war period and an additional 15,000 at the outlying auxiliary fields. Some of these were aces of World War II.

The air station was not without celebrities. In 1944 First Lieutenant Tyrone Power, the popular movie actor, served as a transport pilot there. A few months earlier Sonja Henie, world and Olympic figure skating champion and motion picture actress, lived in the Married Enlisted Men's quarters while her millionaire husband First Lieutenant Daniel R. Topping was stationed at Cherry Point.

When the air station was completed in 1942, the main gate was the one now known as Gate 6, and access to the interior was on Cunningham Boulevard. Across the highway the first off-base housing was built, with Commercial Shopping Center at the edge of the subdivision. All this was somewhat separated from the community of Havelock, which in those days centered around Trader's Store and the railroad station. The two-lane highways remained as country roads for a time, and the ruralness of the area to some extent pervaded the station itself. What had been established consisted of a basis for development which would come gradually over a period of years.

By April 1945 Cherry Point Supply Department was shipping 3.5 million pieces of material a month via land, sea, and air to points all over the world in an effort to push for a final World War II victory. The end of the world war that same year brought to an end the exhaustive effort to train military personnel for national defense. The Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point continued to fulfill its training obligation, but the absence of pressure allowed for a more normal course of growth and development.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary Baker

That Baptists were present in New Bern within 30 years after New Bern's founding, there can be no doubt. Mrs. Edna Avery Cook in her book IN THE BEGINNING---BAPTISTS says that the Reverend Paul Palmer, a Baptist minister, came to New Bern in the 1730's and encouraged Baptists here to organize a church. In 1740 six people were arrested for dissenting from the established religion, and in 1741 three men requested permission to build a Baptist Church. The request was denied. There was to have been religious toleration in the colony, but perhaps the fear of what might happen to the established church was just too great. The three men, James Brinson, William Fulcher, and Nicholas Purifoy, were "charged with a misdemeanor, probably whipped, bound over to keep the peace, and, slapped into jail for three months".

We hear no more of outward religious activity by the Baptists until the early 1800's. On May 11, 1809, Elijah Clark, John Brinson, and Mary Willis Mitchell met in the Clark home to organize a Baptist church in New Bern. The congregation probably continued to meet in the Clark home or other homes while a meeting house was being erected. Property at the intersection of Queen, Metcalf, and Johnson Streets was acquired. (St. Cyprian's Church stands on this spot today.) Mr. Brinson agreed to furnish logs from his place up the Neuse. These were floated to New Bern, where they were sawed and planed in a sawpit near the edge of the river. Volunteer labor by the congregation put up the church.

Quoting Mrs. Cook again,

> The building, a simple, boxy-looking frame structure without a steeple, faced on Johnson Street with a front footage of thirty-six feet and extended back on Metcalf forty feet. From floor to ceiling it was twenty-two feet. In the summer of 1811 it was ready to be used to the glory of God.

A steeple was added later, probably about 1833, and the bell from the county courthouse was purchased and hung in it. This bell soon cracked, and a new one had to be bought. In the beginning the main worship hour was in the afternoon; there were few evening services. Most people had to walk, and the afternoon hour suited them best.

The church was the center of Baptist religious life for over 30 years. On February 5, 1842, the subject of a new meeting house was put forward. Brother Josiah J. Finch, the pastor, listed his reasons:

> the present church was not conveniently located; the building was badly arranged for speakers and hearers; it was too small, it was too old; it was badly in need of repairs.

Three years later a lot on Middle Street was purchased for $1000.

The story is told that there were so many diverse ideas on the plan and style of the new building that one church member, Elijah Clark, sailed to New York and secured a plan for the edifice from Thomas and Son, architects. A similar church had already been built on Madison Avenue in New York, and Mr. Clark no doubt visited it. The plan was accepted by the congregation. There was still, however, a lot of discussion about the interior: plaster molding,

arches, and a niche for the organ. Someone is reputed to have remarked, "what did it matter as they did not have an organ anyway". A short while later, some members of the congregation were arguing over the design of the pews. Once more a member, Colonel John D. Whitford, sailed to New York, had a pew made and shipped back at his own expense. Perhaps when everyone saw the proposed pew, it was easier to agree; for they did.

The style of the new church is Gothic Revival, and it is constructed of red brick, laid in Flemish bond. The front double doors are arched as are the windows. The center portion of the front, containing the front doors, rises to a two-story tower. The church, dedicated on July 2, 1848, was built with galleries on three sides and would seat 600. It cost $12,000. Membership was then 121. By March 1851 the debt on the church had been reduced to $487. In 1853 a picket fence was built around the property, and it was replaced in 1892 with a cast iron one.

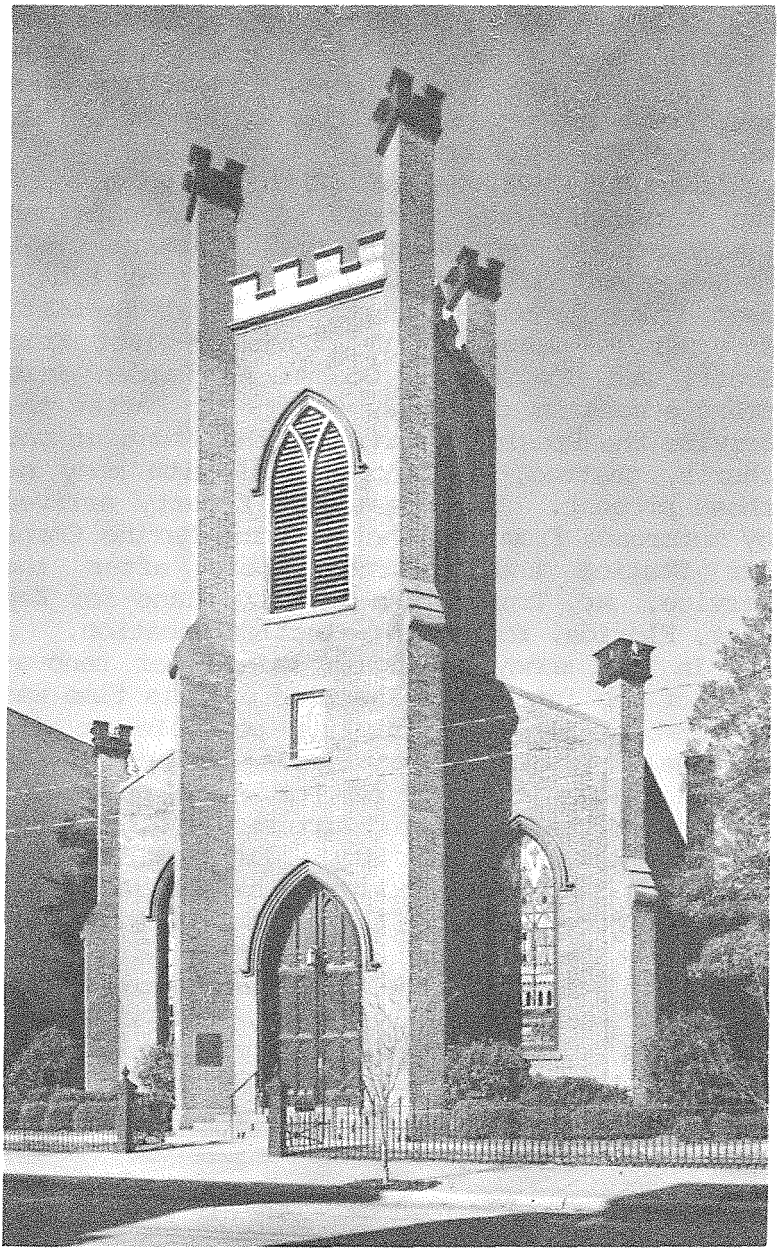
When the Union Army took New Bern in March 1862, the Baptist Church was taken over like many other churches and used as a commissary. The Baptist bell was the official bell rung for guard relief. With Union occupation of the city, many Baptists, including the pastor, fled the city. However, a small group remained throughout the war, holding services in the home of Mr. Zacchaeus Slade, a devoted member and deacon of the church. It was through his efforts that absent members were located after the war and the church was reorganized. One of the first repairs the congregation authorized was work on the belfry and bell. The rest of the church needed repairs, repainting, and general freshening up. In 1867 the Repairs Committee reported that they had money in hand for this work. In August of 1875 the treasurer reported that the church was free of debt.

Membership stood at 114. It was not until 1900 that the church applied for compensation from the Federal government for use of the building during the occupation of New Bern. In 1915 a check for $960 was received.

During all these years the church was referred to and referred to itself as The New Bern Baptist Church or the Baptist Church at New Bern. In April of 1896 the church became The First Baptist Church at New Bern, often shortened to First Baptist. Tabernacle Baptist, a mission church of the downtown church, had been formed in 1895, and the term First Baptist helped to differentiate the two organizations. Tabernacle was the first of many churches started by the downtown church. National Avenue Baptist, Cherry Point Baptist, Neuse River Church, Trent Court Mission, and Colony Baptist Church are others.

In 1895 the church built its first baptistry. Before this the Neuse River was used. As the church has undergone renovations, the baptistry has been moved or undergone modifications also. In 1906 the deacons were instructed to install equipment to heat the water in the baptistry. That same year the congregation voted to renovate the interior of the building. The two side galleries were taken down, the inside was virtually rebuilt, and the stained glass windows were put in. While the church had been investigating electric lights as early as 1890, the church and Sunday school were not wired for electricity until 1916.

First Baptist continued to grow through the early 1900's, and by 1940 many members wanted a new educational building. Along with this there were also the usual needed repairs to the church, and another total renovation ended in 1943. The building was enlarged. The sanctuary was replastered, repanelled, and redecorated with indirect lighting. The pulpit, choir loft, and baptistry were rebuilt. In 1975 a total



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ON MIDDLE STREET. Photo by Conway.

renovation of the exterior was begun. This involved repointing the bricks, a new roof, repairs to the belfry, replacing the stone arches, turning the steps, replacing the guttering with copper, waterproofing the walls, and repainting all trim.

The year 1948 was the 100th anniversary of the church on Middle Street. A 1948 event long remembered was President Harry S. Truman's visit to New Bern. On November 7 of that year President Truman attended church at First Baptist. Governor R. Gregg Cherry, Governor-elect Kerr Scott, and Congressman Graham A. Barden were among others in attendance that day. After the service the President stood at the front of the church, chatted, and shook hands with many of those present. The presidential party arrived by motorcade from the Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station and returned there after the service. Mr. Truman then left by plane for Key West, Florida, for a post-election vacation.

In 1982 money was again raised for renovation of the interior. The wish by this time was to restore it as nearly as possible to its original Gothic appearance. The lovely panelling was stripped of its white paint and restained, the stenciling around the three sides was redone, and Gothic style lighting fixtures were hung. Today the congregation is awaiting a new pipe organ which will require minor modification of the choir area.

As in years past the congregation needs more room for educational programs, and expansion plans are being considered. In closing, I refer again to Mrs. Cook, quoting the Reverend Fred W. Eason, who wrote in the RELIGIOUS HERALD over 100 years ago:

> The Lord has helped us! In His mighty name we float our banner, and gird up our loins, and press on!

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CALEB DAVIS BRADHAM

Dorothy DeWeerdt

Caleb Davis Bradham was a local boy who made good. Photographs show him to be extraordinarily handsome, with a winning smile and a luxuriant mustache. His history in New Bern is that of a man who was universally popular, and his story is a prime example of great hopes and great talent all but destroyed by malignant circumstance. Bradham was born May 27, 1867, in Chinquipin, Duplin County, son of George Washington and Julia McCann Bradham. He came of a prosperous family with a proud ancestry. His great-great-great-grandfather, John McCann, had been an officer in Washington's army.

Caleb entered the University of North Carolina in 1886, but having expressed a preference for medicine, he enrolled in the University of Maryland, which he attended for three years. At that point Caleb met with the first of the financial reverses which were to plague him at crucial points in his life. His father lost his money, and there was simply no way to pay medical school tuition.

Thrown suddenly on his own resources, he put the idea of becoming a physician behind him forever and left college. He chose to come to New Bern and promptly obtained a position teaching in the Vance Academy, a private school run by Appleton and Augusta Oaksmith. There he remained for two years, apparently saving money so that he could return to college and prepare himself for a career that would take advantage of his interest in medicine without the expense of medical school, which was in his circum-

stances prohibitive. He went back to the University of Maryland, this time to study pharmacy. After graduation Bradham returned to New Bern with the idea of going into business but with little capital. In 1893, using mostly borrowed money, he bought a pharmacy at the corner of Pollock and Middle Streets. By all accounts he was a charming, fun loving person. He quickly became a part of the community, joining the Masons and also the North Carolina Naval Militia.

Like many drugstores of the time, Bradham's Pharmacy had a soda fountain where customers could stop for a cool, refreshing drink, and it became, as so many drugstores were, a gathering place for friends. Soft drinks at that time were made with syrups mixed with carbonated water at the fountain, and their flavor and quality depended upon the skill of the vendor.

Pharmaceutical publications back then routinely carried articles offering suggestions for new and novel syrups and drinks. In the 1880's two new ingredients had attracted attention. The first was an extract of the coca leaf from Peru, which was perfectly legal in those days and which, not surprisingly, was reputed to produce feelings of well-being; the second was an extract of the kola nut, originally from Africa and later the West Indies, a product high in caffeine. In 1881 the first carbonated coca beverage was originated. The January 1883 issue of the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHARMACY called attention to the use of kola nuts in a "refreshing and invigorating drink throughout a large part of tropical Africa" and suggested that there would be a tremendous demand for such a drink in "civilized countries," and in 1887 Coca Cola had registered its first U. S. patent.

Bradham was undoubtedly aware of these developments. Probably at the instigation of friends and sensing a demand, Bradham, by then

known as Brad, began experimenting with mixtures of syrups to create new flavors. Late in the 1890's he invented a winner. His patrons dubbed it Brad's Drink, and it became very popular locally.

By 1898 Brad's Drink was known as Pepsi Cola. There is no record of the origin of the new name, but wherever it came from it certainly has captured and held the allegiance of consumers.

On September 23, 1902, Bradham applied to register the first Pepsi Cola trademark, the famous script logo so familiar to older cola drinkers, and in December he incorporated, holding 97 shares of stock in his own name and apportioning one share each to his three dummy directors. The soft drink business must have been good because by 1902 Bradham had turned management of the pharmacy over to an assistant, R. F. Butler, known to New Bernians as Uncle Dick, so that he could devote his attention exclusively to Pepsi Cola. Also in 1902 Bradham married Sarah Charity Credle. It was an important year for him both professionally and personally.

At this point Bradham ran a one-man operation; he mixed the syrup, packaged it, and also went out to build up sales. Modern bottling machinery had not even been invented until 1892 and was not yet in general use in 1902, so Bradham's business consisted only of syrup sales and was primarily by mail order and exclusively to soda fountains.

The business continued to grow in 1903; over 2000 gallons of syrup were shipped in the first three months. By April 1, the business had outgrown its quarters back of the pharmacy and moved to a rented building.

Although Bradham had little experience in merchandising, he must have realized that publicity would help substantially in building up national demand for Pepsi. The first trade-

mark ad for Pepsi appeared in the New Bern DAILY JOURNAL on February 25, 1903, and advertising costs for the first year amounted to what must have seemed the substantial sum of $1888.78. Total sales in 1903 were an encouraging 7968 gallons.

By 1904 annual sales totaled 19,848 gallons, and Bradham was ready to expand again. He bought Bishop's Mill at the northwest corner of Hancock and Johnson Streets for $5000 so that he would have space for bottling as well as syrup making. The structure, built in the 1850's, had at first been a woodworking establishment and during the Civil War had been converted to a coffin factory by the occupying Union forces. The DAILY JOURNAL reported the purchase in an expansive article (September 29, 1904), which prophesied early acquisition of other plants in Richmond, Norfolk, and many other southern cities.

In 1907, with sales topping 104,000 gallons, Bradham bought land adjoining his factory and built a three story home office and expanded bottling plant. It was a handsome structure, designed by Herbert Woodley Simpson, architect of many turn-of-the-century New Bern buildings.

In the meantime Bradham had been busy franchising territories. By the end of 1909 he had at least 250 bottlers in 24 states.

Life must have seemed sweet indeed to the self-made business leader from Chinquipin. In 1908 he bought one of the most prestigious homes in New Bern, the Slover house at the corner of East Front and Johnson Streets and paid $18,000 for it. Perhaps he looked back with a smile to the day only 15 years before when he had had to sign notes for almost every cent of the purchase price of Bradham's Pharmacy.

The Charles Slover house was and remains New Bern's "grandest Greek Revival-style residence." It was built in 1848-49 by a prosperous trader who moved inland to High Point during the Civil

War to avoid the conflict in New Bern. During the occupation of the city by Union forces, General Ambrose Burnside used the house as his headquarters. The structure is an imposing three story brick building and incorporates in its cast-iron balconies the finest examples of ornamental ironwork surviving in New Bern. The impressive first floor rooms are decorated with molded plaster cornices, ceiling medallions, and marble mantels, both white and black. Bradham must have been proud indeed.

By 1915 Bradham at age 48 had reached the zenith of his career as Pepsi assets topped $1,000,000. He was an officer of a bank, honorary president of a state-owned railroad, and an active officer in the North Carolina Naval Militia, from which he was to retire in 1917 with the rank of rear admiral. He took an interest in the School of Pharmacy at the University of North Carolina and between 1901 and 1930 offered an annual prize to the student with the highest average during two and later three years of study.

Little is known of Bradham's personal life. He fathered three children: Mary, Caleb Darnell, and George Washington. He attended the Presbyterian Church and voted the Democratic ticket. He was an outdoorsman who enjoyed boating, hunting, and fishing, and prided himself on his marksmanship.

And then came war. In 1917 Pepsi cost 5¢ a bottle, and sugar, a major ingredient, was 5½¢ a pound. By 1920 sugar was 22½¢ a pound. Should Bradham buy in quantity, gambling that the price would continue to rise, or stand pat? He bought, and sugar rose to 26¢, temporarily; then the bottom fell out of the market, and by December 20, sugar was selling for 3½¢ and later fell below 2¢.

Bradham lost $150,000 in 1920 alone. He was forced to borrow on real estate and later to buy back real estate, including Bradham's Pharmacy,

CALEB DAVIS BRADHAM (1867-1934). Pepsi Cola photo.

which he had earlier included in Pepsi company assets. He poured $17,500 back into the company in this way and was also forced to sell stock in a futile effort to save the business.

By January 1922 Pepsi assets were $53,008 and its liabilities $249,536. In March 1923 the inevitable happened: Bradham's company went bankrupt, and the assets were sold for $30,000. It was not only the sugar market that ruined him. Bradham had known little of advertising or marketing, and he had invested in bottling before the technology was perfected. It was said of him, "He had a modern business in the wrong decades; he was a third of a century ahead of his time".

At 56 Bradham was almost back where he had started; he again owned Bradham's Pharmacy as well as some other real estate, but for him it was too late to go back behind the counter. He hired a manager to run the business but showed little interest in it; in four years he sold out. Other business enterprises were unsuccessful. His farmland brought in no revenue; his investment in an ice plant did not work out; two banks in which he owned stock failed; and he had to repay two notes which he had co-signed for long-time employees. In the meantime the Pepsi Cola Company had been reorganized under new management, but Bradham had no part in it. Only a few years before it had seemed that nothing could go wrong; now nothing went right.

A measure of financial security was provided in 1924 by the Shriners, who made him Recorder of the Sudan Temple, that is, the secretary and business manager for the Shriners of eastern North Carolina. He held that position until 1930, when he retired as "Recorder Emeritus".

Caleb Davis Bradham died February 19, 1934, and in 1983 the national president and CEO of the multi-million dollar Pepsi Cola Company dedicated a bronze plaque at the corner of Pollock and Middle Streets to commemorate the

eighty-fifth anniversary of the birth of Brad's Drink.

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BOOK REVIEW

A WOMAN DOCTOR'S CIVIL WAR: ESTHER HILL HAWKS DIARY (October 1862-November 1866), edited by Gerard Schwartz. (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1984. Reprinted 1989. Illustrations, maps, index, and bibliography. 291 pp. $21.95.)

This unusual record of the Civil War period springs from an unlikely source: the actual diaries of a female physician and teacher brought up and trained in the North and living in the South during that time of terrible strife. Dr. Hawks's diary records a period largely spent at Union Army coastal encampments along the South Carolina and Florida coasts.

As with so many other personal records of that era, the Esther Hill Hawks diary was handwritten in small notebooks. An unknown person put the little books away, and they were ultimately forgotten. Remaining hidden until 1975, they were uncovered during an apartment renovation in Essex County, Massachusetts. Three of these priceless notebooks were recovered from a trash pile on the apartment site. Professor Gerard Schwartz of Western Carolina University utilized the contents of the books to produce this Civil War diary.

We are introduced to the Hawks family in a 28-page foreword which begins with the birth of Esther Hill in New Hampshire in 1833. After schooling in her native state she entered the teaching profession. In 1854 at the age of 21 she married Dr. John Milton Hawks. One possible reason for the attraction was Dr. Hawks's active political life, in which he advocated various

reforms and, in particular, women's rights, including the right to vote.

During their courtship the young doctor's interests took him to Savannah, Georgia, and then to Saint Augustine, Florida. They were apart for almost two years. In this period the basis for his future involvement in the South was formed, and a few days after the marriage they sailed from New York to Florida and began their honeymoon at Manatee, a small town on the Manatee River near Tampa Bay. Esther started to study her husband's medical books, and her interest in medicine heightened.

In 1855 Mrs. Hawks fulfilled a long-held wish and enrolled in the New England Female Medical School. In mid-nineteenth century America women in the medical profession were few, mainly because they were not accepted in established male-dominated schools. Esther Hill Hawks graduated in 1857 and went to Manchester, New Hampshire, where her husband had a thriving practice. She did not join him but set up on her own; however, they both worked in the drugstore of which he was the owner. Common interest in the anti-slavery movement also brought them together as he lectured on the subject throughout New England.

Shortly after the Civil War began, Dr. John Hawks became more vocal in his abolitionist views. He agitated in Washington for an appointment in the South, eventually succeeded, and arrived in South Carolina in April 1862. He urged his wife to join him, but she was unable to do so until October. Her wartime diary starts at this time and begins with her voyage by ship to Hilton Head, which in adverse weather took a week instead of the usual two and a half days.

Many diaries of the Civil War period are by military or political figures who were directly involved in the shooting war or in the battle of intrigues generated in Richmond or Washington.

Dr. Esther Hawks was not one of these. The rare candor of this work, compiled by an observer of astute perception, is the key to its value as a record. Not one to disguise or paper over faults of Union or Confederate personnel or the policies of either government, Dr. Hawks gives candid judgments of the people and situations she encounters. Describing the Union troops and the way they treated Beaufort, the city they occupied, Dr. Hawks reported, ". . . our crazy solderly [soldiers] made sad havoc with its beauty and its wealth".

Her principal task was that of teaching freed slaves who huddled in camps at many points under the "protection" of their liberators. She wrote that no colored woman or girl was safe from attack by soldiers and named the 55th Pennsylvania Regiment as the culprit. On the other hand she details the public trial of three black soldiers who attacked a white woman, were convicted, and summarily hanged in public. She regretted that the same treatment was not accorded white soldiers who attacked black women.

While most of her pupils were civilian, she also taught the enlisted free blacks of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment when they were sent south. She was very sympathetic to their lack of education. On a more human note, the Chaplain of the 54th was in her view the best forager and the best shot in the regiment: he always returned from expeditions with food and drink for all.

Infrequently she was called on to practice medicine when she was permitted to do so. Even her husband did not encourage her; in fact he seems to have thwarted many of her desires apart from her medicine.

From the islands of South Carolina she later went to Florida, and after that back to Charleston, continuing to teach until after the Civil War ended. By the conclusion of the

diaries it is November of 1866, and both she and her husband are living in Florida. Eventually she returned to New Hampshire, living there, with frequent trips to Florida, until her death in 1906. Her legacy is an account of the Civil War in the South seen from a unique perspective. She rarely complains about her lot in life, but with a keen sense of observation gives us yet one more point of view of that terrible time in the nation's growth to maturity.

Jim Gunn