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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)

# BAYARD WOOTTEN: PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST

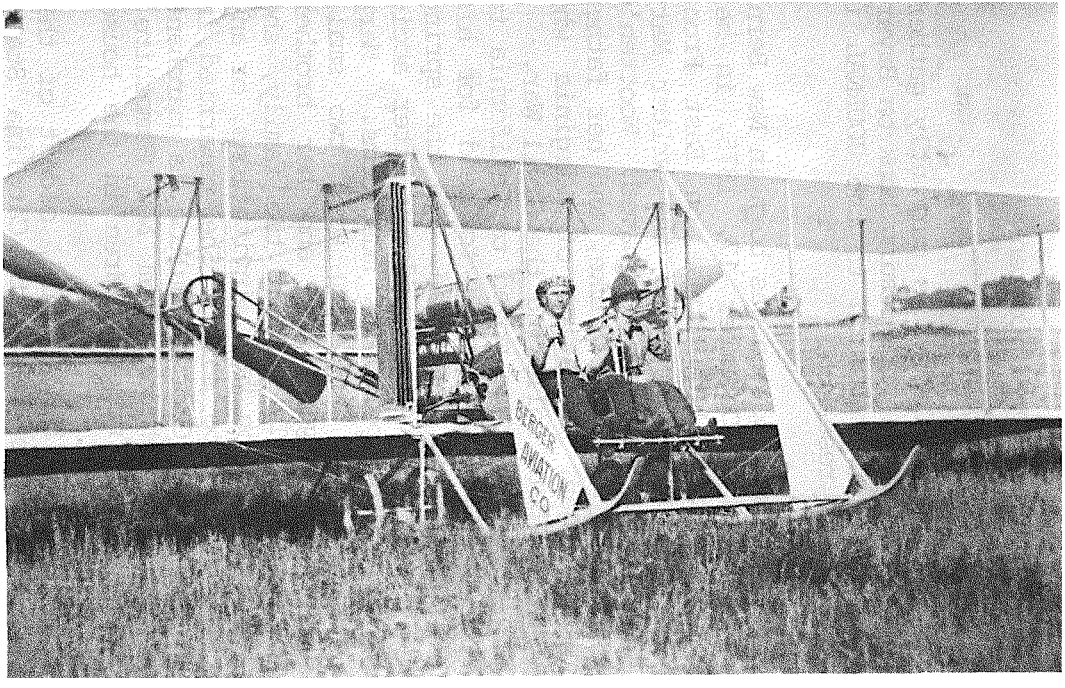
Jerry W. Cotten

Editor's note: Mr. Cotten is currently gathering information for a forthcoming book on Bayard Wootten. This contribution to the JOURNAL is based on his own research.

Mary Bayard Morgan Wootten was born in New Bern, North Carolina, on December 17, 1875, in her grandfather's antebellum house on East Front Street. Her grandmother was the writer Mary Bayard Clarke for whom she was named. Wootten's mother was Mary Devereux Clarke, and her father was Rufus Morgan, a native of Virginia who settled in New Bern following the Civil War.

In 1879 Rufus Morgan moved to California to start a business and planned to send for his family when finances permitted. In the spring of 1880, however, he died suddenly after accidentally consuming poisonous mushrooms. Mary Morgan was left in New Bern with two small children, Bayard, aged five, and her brother Sam, who was one. To support the family, she painted decorations on fans, invitations, or any object which could be sold. She remarried in 1886, this time to George Moulton, a merchant and 44-year-old bachelor from New Hampshire. There would soon be more children in the house on East Front Street.

In the fall of 1892 Bayard, oldest of the children, applied to the North Carolina State Normal and Industrial School at Greensboro, now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She was accepted into the first class at the new college and attended for about a year and a




"Bayard Wootten (on right) in a Wright Brothers flyer at the New Bern fairgrounds in 1914." UNC photo.

half. An uncle who helped finance Bayard's education also helped her get a job as an art teacher at the Arkansas Deaf-Mute Institute in Little Rock. After only a few months, however, she moved to a school for the deaf in Cove Spring, Georgia. Here she met Charles Thomas Wootten, a man several years older whose source of income was the practice of law.

In the fall of 1897 the couple married at Cove Spring without informing her family of the event and settled in the nearby town of Wadley, Georgia. Word of the marriage reached New Bern through a newspaper account. The family was incensed, and a temporary period of estrangement followed. In 1901 Bayard Wootten's marriage ended with her husband's failure to provide adequate support.

She borrowed train fare and returned to New Bern with one small son and expecting another. Wootten had little recourse but the painting activities which had previously provided a meager livelihood for her mother. She established a studio in her home and painted artistic designs on invitations, score cards, parasols, fans, and dresses. During this period Wootten is said to have designed the first trademark for Pepsi-Cola, a drink invented by Caleb Bradham, her next-door neighbor in New Bern.

Around 1904 Wootten started experimenting with photography. She was helped at first by a local photographer named Edward Gerock, but when it became clear that Wootten was going to be a competitor, Gerock's assistance came to an end. Wootten's transition from painting to photography was gradual. Much of her training came from salesmen for photographic supply companies, and she studied for several weeks in Asheville under Nace Brock, a photographer she had first met around 1890.

The North Carolina General Assembly established Camp Glenn, a National Guard summer training camp near Morehead City, in 1906. The

photography business in New Bern declined during the summer months as many residents moved away in search of more hospitable weather. Wootten decided to go to the camp to seek photographic orders. Her initial reception by authorities was unenthusiastic, but she eventually prevailed. Soldiers liked Wootten's work, and the commander permitted her to build a small "photo hut" on the grounds. Wootten was later designated chief of publicity for the Guard and was even issued a uniform to wear.

The fledgling photography enterprise prospered, and by 1907 little painting was being done. Wootten built a studio beside the family home in New Bern, and her half-brother George Moulton joined her full-time in the business.

In 1914 Wootten made a daring flight over the New Bern fairgrounds in an open Wright Brothers airplane and took some of the earliest aerial photographs in North Carolina. Later her studio was selected to make publicity pictures for a large land sale near Havelock. This job gave Wootten an unexpected opportunity. The sale was handled by an advertising agent from New York who subsequently promised the photographer other work if she would move to the city. Wootten seized upon what appeared to be a golden opportunity and in the spring of 1917 made her move. She opened a studio in New York across the street from bustling Pennsylvania Station, but it lasted only about three months. By 1918 she had returned to North Carolina and was on the road again in search of photography business.

In the fall of the year Wootten had portrait engagements scheduled in Chapel Hill. While in the town she met Frederick Henry Koch, a University of North Carolina drama professor. Koch wanted his theatrical group, the Carolina Playmakers, documented in pictures and reached an agreement with Wootten to do the work.

During the first few months on the job,

"Bayard Wootten (1875-1959) during the 1930's while at the height of her career." UNC photo.

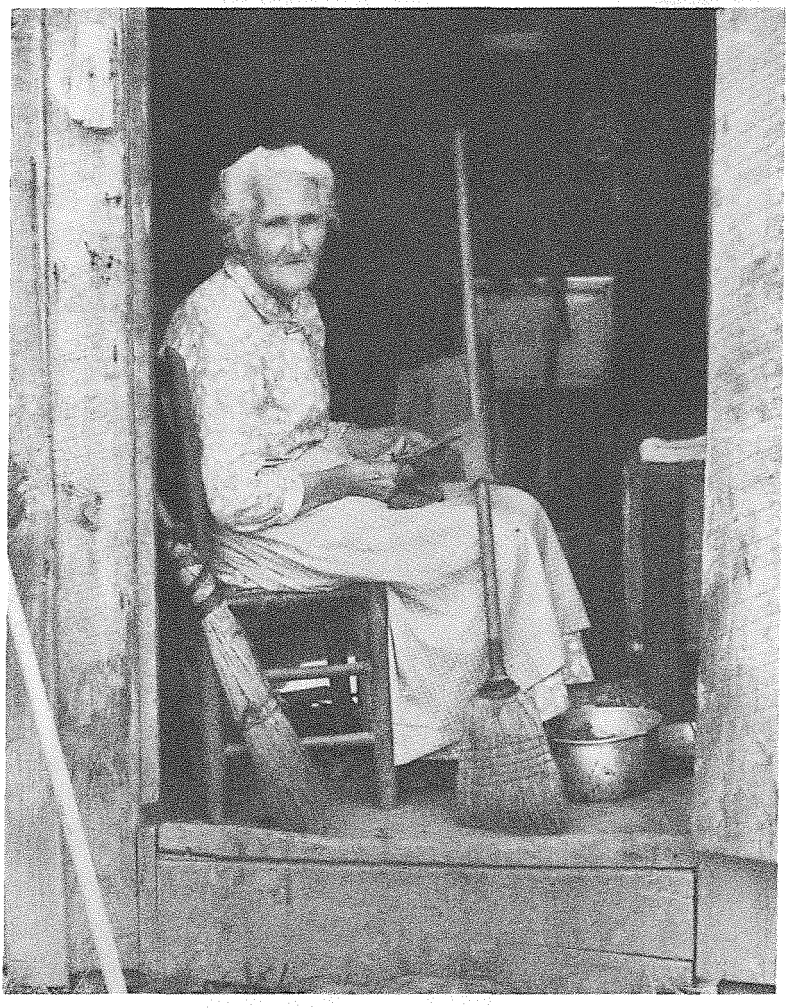
Wootten photographed future novelist Thomas Wolfe, one of Koch's drama students. More notably, however, was the foothold she gained in the lucrative photography business at the university. By 1922 she had won the contract for the college yearbook and, except for one year, kept it for over two decades.

Wootten and her staff traveled throughout North Carolina in pursuit of photographic work. Negatives were carried back to New Bern to be developed and printed, and in 1928 the photographer opened a studio in Chapel Hill to accommodate the growing business. Also in the late 1920's Wootten visited her cousin Lucy Morgan, a teacher at Penland School in the North Carolina mountains. The trip to Penland and many subsequent visits gave Wootten an intimate look at the rural people of the west, and they became a favorite subject of her "camera studies."

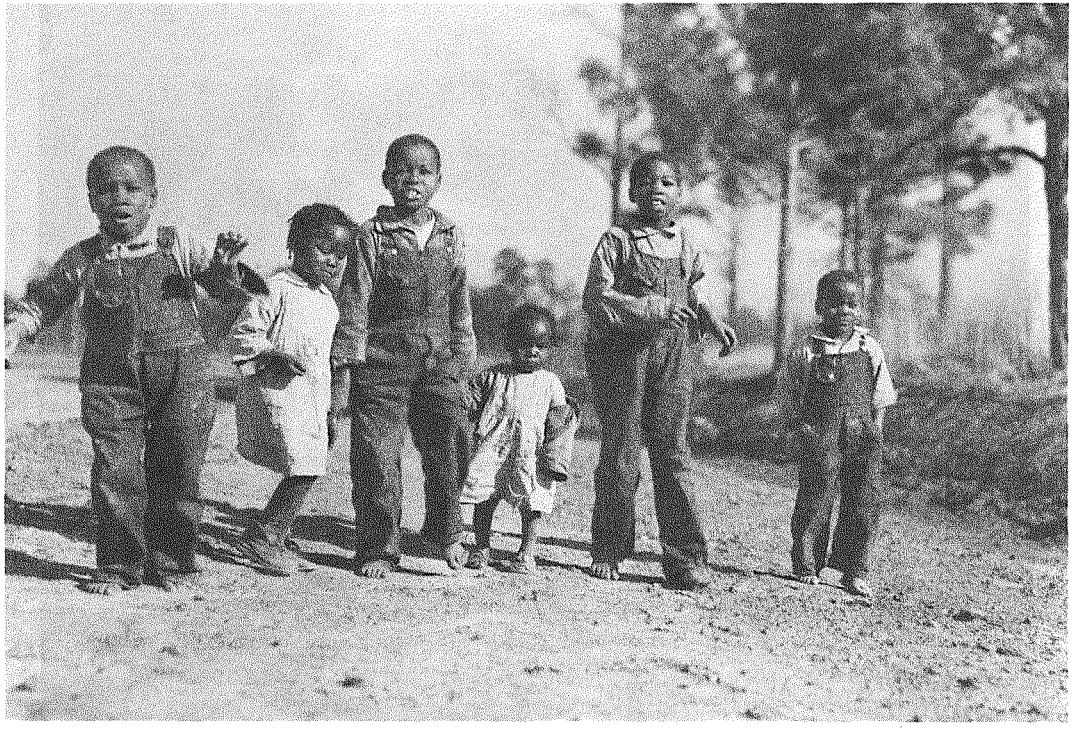
The photographer also traveled along the southeast coast to photograph public and private gardens. She made pictures at Orton Plantation near Wilmington, Wormsloe Plantation near Savannah, and the Bellingrath Gardens in Mobile, Alabama, but the historic buildings and gardens around Charleston, South Carolina, became favorite subjects.

Wootten's interest increasingly turned toward photography as an art form. Fortunately for the studio, her half-brother and partner George Moulton proved to be the business manager that she was not. Wootten sent a collection of prints to the Fine Arts Theatre in Boston for an exhibition in June 1932. Her work included both landscapes and portraits, but it was the latter that attracted greatest attention.

The photographer's work was praised by Boston newspapers, and the reviews were reprinted by the papers in North Carolina. This public recognition boosted Wootten's reputation, and other invitations to exhibit her work came from throughout the eastern United States. The



"A mountain woman seated in her cabin door, 1930's."
UNC photo.



"Children walking along a road, 1930's." UNC photo.

"Men playing checkers on the porch of a country store near Sevierville, Tennessee, 1930's." UNC photo.

following year another exhibition was held in Boston, and then Chicago. By the end of the 1930's Wootten's work had been shown in at least nine states and the District of Columbia. Between 1934 and 1941 she illustrated six major books. CABINS IN THE LAUREL proved to be the most popular and has been through several printings since its original appearance in 1935. The photographer was at the height of her career.

Many of her photographs were made into murals, some as long as nine feet. These were hung in both private homes and public buildings including the governor's office. One large mural of a mountain apple tree in bloom on Clarkson's Knob at Little Switzerland can still be seen in the Craft House at Penland School.

The financial consequences of Wootten's picture taking travels were of little concern to the photographer, and her adventures with the camera became the fodder for many stories. She photographed Linville Falls after being lowered over a cliff by rope. On another occasion a group of fishermen saved her automobile from the Atlantic Ocean by pulling it from sand on the Outer Banks. In her sixties, the photographer withstood a swarm of honey bees to make pictures of men raiding a bee tree.

Wootten preferred a masculine style of dress, cut her hair short and combed it straight back. She was addicted to cigarettes and enjoyed a couple of drinks after a long day. In the 1940's she suffered a hearing loss and by the end of the decade failing eyesight ended work with the camera. The photographer retired from the business in 1954 and returned to her old home in New Bern. She died there on April 6, 1959.

Bayard Wootten made photography her avenue of artistic expression and pleasure. The studio was a place she went out of financial necessity, but exploring the world beyond with a camera was

her passion and high calling. Possessed with a talent for gaining the confidence of strangers, she made the large and intimidating camera seem less so. Her subjects might simply be themselves. Bayard Wootten would be photographer and artist.

# YOUR LIBERTY TOWN
## New Bern During World War II

Mary Osborne Conover

In the years immediately prior to World War II New Bern was a town waiting for something to happen, something to improve the economy. In that context the war proved a boon. Bringing in new blood and new money, introducing new ideas and new attitudes, it injected new life into a community which has never since been the same.

While some deplored the changes being wrought, a majority of the citizenry welcomed the influx of military men and women with open arms and did everything possible to provide for both their needs and numbers.

Some accommodations fortunately were temporary and could be undone without damage. To increase living space for service families, partitions were hastily erected to create apartments within historic houses. Removed when no longer needed, one would hardly know they had been there.

This is true of many of the physical changes that occurred in New Bern at the time: they were temporary, to fight a war that was closer to home than most people here today can conceive. German U-boats lurked off the North Carolina coast and were sinking many American ships. There was fear of sabotage, and guards were posted on New Bern's two bridges to insure that they remained open to traffic.

Guards and security patrols in the area came from Camp Battle, an Army installation at Glenburnie Park which later housed German and Italian soldiers shipped here as prisoners of

war. Unfortunate enough to have been the enemy and to have been captured, the prisoners were well cared for and put to work--not at hard labor, but in National Cemetery, for example, maintaining the grounds.

If any one individual more than others deserves credit for turning New Bern around, the nominee would arguably be Congressman Graham A. Barden. Representative from North Carolina's Third District, he pushed for the location of an air station at Cherry Point and was instrumental in the planning and construction of the huge installation.

A bog occupied largely by rattlesnakes, crabbers, and fishermen, the land was a privately owned wilderness of swamp, pocosin, and quicksand crisscrossed by creeks--so hostile an environment for an airfield that workers had to pour concrete for the first runway four times.

The runways of local airports were used, as were other make-do facilities, to expedite activation of the air station by satisfying its innumerable needs. Barracks could not be built rapidly enough, nor could Havelock, then a mere bend in the road, absorb the hordes of service and support personnel coming here as the war gained momentum.

New Bern inherited the overflow, becoming a home away from home, literally and figuratively: for many, a place to live; for others, a place simply to relax from the rigors of wartime training and aircraft maintenance routine.

The second oldest city in North Carolina became "Your Liberty Town"--profiled by Gertrude Carraway in a guidebook of that time, copyright 1943. Illustrated with pencil sketches by Corporal Donald E. Brooks, USMCR, its sponsors were the City of New Bern, Craven County, New Bern Historical Commission, Merchants Association, and Chamber of Commerce.

New Bern's two United Service Organizations (USO) clubs were among the best equipped in the

state. Open daily from 7:00 A. M. to 1:00 A. M., they served free coffee and doughnuts, and each maintained a canteen. Special features included a servicemen's wives club and shorthand, typing, and hobby classes. Parties, social gatherings, and radio broadcasts were frequent.

The East Front Street Club boasted a well-stocked library, and servicemen were privileged to spend the night in the large hall. Outdoors there were boats for sailing, rowing, or fishing, and facilities for badminton, horseshoes, archery, and softball. The club building faced the Neuse River just north of the site now occupied by Minnette Duffy Park, and its front porch offered an excellent view of the river. The building appears on the Sanborn Map of New Bern, October 1948, as a "Federal Recreation Center".

Located in the three-story Salvation Army building at the corner of Craven and Queen Streets, the North Craven Club had a servicemen's lounge on the first floor and dormitories upstairs where women in the service could spend the night. New Bern maintained USO club activity during the war and for several years afterward.

Lounges for men and women in uniform were operated at Victory House, the Woman's Clubhouse at Union Point, and Stanly Hall, entering on Craven Street next to what is now Fred & Claire's Restaurant and up the main stairway. Dances were held from time to time at the Armory; the Episcopal Parish House featured waffles; Saint Paul's Catholic Church served Sunday night suppers; and the Presbyterian Recreation Center had equipment for servicemen spending the night to cook their breakfast while on weekend leave.

New Bern's Victory House at 417 East Front Street was the former home of Senator Furnifold M. Simmons. The spacious rooms of the old house

were opened to servicemen in October 1942 by Mrs. Joseph Patterson, daughter of the late senator. Through her generosity servicemen enjoyed the piano, the Victrola, with its large assortment of records, and desks for writing to mothers and friends at home. The dining room always held numerous delicacies, including home-made cake, candy, and other foods.

The town also had its share of taverns and rinky-dink bars which the local populace was not very happy about, recalls Rosalind White. Visiting here as the 18-year-old fiancée of one of the first Marines to be stationed at Cherry Point, she naively wondered "where all those people were going" when she saw them hurrying into the bars. Coming from murky Pittsburgh, what impressed her far more about New Bern was the weather: it was like being on another planet", she remembers, "to see the green of the trees here and the blue of the sky.

Mrs. White stayed at the Hotel Queen Anne, where the rate was $16 a week. It was one of four hotels then in town. Once a private mansion, the gracious structure on Broad Street (now the site of First Citizens Bank) was a gathering place popular throughout the war for its cocktail lounge and well-run dining room.

Another popular gathering place was the Trent Pines Club. Formerly the Earl Sloan Estate overlooking the Trent River it is near the New Bern Golf & Country Club. Membership was open to civilians and officers to enjoy such "varied recreations and attractions" as a cocktail lounge, game rooms, dancing, cards, ping-pong, music, complete dining room service and guest rooms, plus fishing and hunting, boating, bathing, and horseback riding on the scenic 586-acre grounds. Yacht anchorage was available as well.

A review of the club's war years register by subsequent owners revealed that Lieutenant John F. Kennedy was at one time a guest.

While the hotels and taverns, the USO clubs, and church fellowship halls were centers of public activity, much wartime socializing occurred in private homes. One New Year's Eve party given by Dr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Latham was so large, their daughter Janet recalls, that only a jukebox in a corner of their formal living room could provide dance music loud enough for people to hear. Adds Janet, then 20, "We had a ball"!

For all the socializing, one never forgot there was a war on, affecting every aspect of community life and its every age group. Barbour Boat Works built minesweepers, net tenders, and salvage vessels for the Navy, and the gleaming white hull of the United States Coast Guard Cutter Pamlico, docked at the foot of Pollock Street, received a wartime gray coat.

Boy Scouts joined civil defense volunteers as plane spotters. Their watchtowers were the cupola on the Post Office at the corner of Middle and New Streets and the observatory atop the Hotel New Bernian, 226 Middle Street. With eyes peeled for enemy bombers, the spotters often identified low-flying planes as being piloted by marines from Cherry Point buzzing the homes of friends and girlfriends.

As legitimate business boomed in New Bern during World War II, so did bootlegging. Craven County corn and white lightning found a ready market here before, during, and even after the war. Lumber company personnel knew the moonshiners by the cut of the boards they ordered for mash boxes. A wholesale grocer knew them by their ability to amass sugar stamps. The general public knew them by the jacked up back ends of the cars and trucks they used to transport moonshine across New Bern's bridges--a feat accomplished with immunity by pulling the handles of fire boxes around town to summon firemen and policemen to non-existent emergencies, distracting attention from the boot-

legger's loads.

While moonshine was unlawful, gambling was legal in New Bern during the war, and it is said that the "take" from slot machines in an officers' lounge paid off the mortgage on its building for the Elks Lodge.

Everyone who lived here during the war, and is still a resident, recalls it from a slightly different perspective, usually colored by the individual's age at the time. There is, however, agreement on certain points. One, while the conflict brought some kooks, the majority were normal, decent people who enjoyed being in New Bern. Two, the visitors had reason to appreciate the town because of the ways townsfolk pitched in, making space for them, nourishing and entertaining them, and waving fond goodbyes when they left.

Many servicemen never left. If they had to leave, they returned, a tribute to New Bern's hospitality and its enduring charm.

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# ST. CYPRIAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Mary Baker

No church has its beginning with the church building. That is usually the culmination of many years of wishing and planning on the part of the congregation. So it was with St. Cyprian's Church.

In 1833 the Right Reverend Levi Silliman Ives, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, visited New Bern and reported the black congregation to be in a "flourishing condition". Dr. Richard Mason had reported in 1826 that Sunday evening services at Christ Church had often been given over "to lectures on the Scriptures and catechetical instruction for the benefit of the coloured people". One can probably say that it was the latter that caused the "flourishing condition" mentioned by Bishop Ives.

In 1845 the Reverend William N. Hawks formed an independent black congregation, however, it did not survive. In 1854 James W. Bryan wrote that the elegantly dressed free blacks of New Bern "have taken the Episcopal Church" and have provided a numerous Sunday School following for the pastor.

After the Civil War the Reverend Edwin M. Forbes, a New Bern native, became Rector of Christ Church. The date was January 1, 1866. By all reports he was much beloved, not only by his own congregation but by all who knew him. Gertrude Carraway in CROWN OF LIFE says, "Through his entire career he went about doing good". It was this man who established the black communicants as an independent congrega-

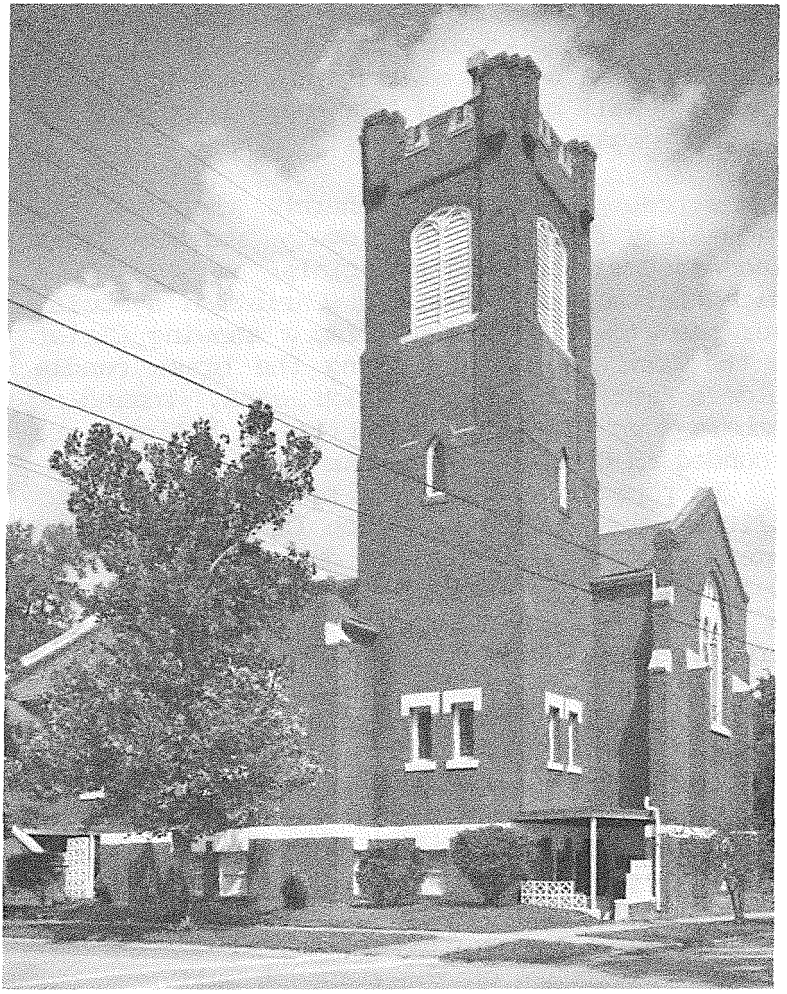
tion. At the diocesan convention of 1867 Mr. Forbes announced that "all the colored communicants have been transferred to St. Cyprian's Church here, with the Rev. H. A. Skinner in charge".

The building which had become St. Cyprian's was built by the Baptists in 1811 and had been their first house of worship. It was a frame structure, fronting on Johnson Street, with Queen Street and Metcalf Street as the other boundaries of the property. The building had served the Baptists for over 35 years. According to records in the office of the Register of Deeds, the Baptist congregation sold the building to the Christian Church of New Bern on January 21, 1851, for the sum of $600. The Christian Church sold it to the Episcopal Church in 1875. The price was $350. There is a tradition that Mr. Forbes gave the money to purchase the church. It is certainly true that he devoted much time to St. Cyprian's, assisting in the work of that church.

From the beginning of the church in 1867 the rectors were white. However in 1880 the Reverend Peter W. Eassey became the first black rector, serving until 1884. Since Mr. Eassey's term rectors have been black.

The building was over 50 years old when St. Cyprian's congregation took it over. Church membership had grown over the years, and it was probably in the early 1900's that the need and the desire for a new building came forth. Herbert Woodley Simpson, New Bern's premier architect of the time, designed the new building which was built 1910-1912. The Reverend J. L. Taylor, who was rector 1907-1913, oversaw the construction. Quoting Peter Sandbeck in THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF NEW BERN AND CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA:

> Built of load bearing brick laid in five to one common bond, St. Cyprian's exterior



TOWER HIGHLIGHTS ST. CYPRIAN'S CHURCH. Photo by Conway.

> reflects the continued early twentieth century popularity of the Gothic Revival style. The interior of St. Cyprian's retains much of its original Gothic Revival detailing, including beaded board ceilings, scissors-type trusses above the transepts [the two extending sides of the church], lancet-arched wainscoting panels in the chancel, a wealth of original or early pews, and a well preserved late nineteenth century pipe organ.

As one enters the church the eye is immediately drawn to the lovely stained glass windows, most of them memorials. They are a delightful mix of color and Christian symbols. Over the altar is a large window showing Christ as the good shepherd. Among the brass candle holders are two seven-branch ones, reminding members that the Bible and their beliefs are grounded in Old Testament times.

The pipe organ mentioned by Mr. Sandbeck was built by the Barckhoff Church Organ Company in Pomeroy, Ohio, as indicated on the name plate. It is not certain whether the organ was original to the building. Many ideas have been put forward as to where the organ came from, but there is not sufficient evidence to substantiate any of these. The instrument seems to be contemporary with the building, which according to Peter Sandbeck was constructed between 1910 and 1912. The Barckhoff Church Organ Company was relocated several times during its existence but only operated in Pomeroy, Ohio, between 1910 and 1913. Structural changes indicate the keydesk and pipe case facing the chancel to be earlier than the pipe case on the transept wall.

In the late 1800's it was common for municipalities to let churches have all the water they wanted at no charge. This gave rise to the practice of using water motors which supplied air for the pipe organ. There is evidence that

this was done at St. Cyprian's, and the Barckhoff company is known to have built such instruments. Later, there was a feeder bellows which some of the members remember pumping as boys. It was not uncommon for the youngsters to fall asleep between hymns. They had to be awakened for the music to begin and probably were roundly scolded by both the organist and their parents!

The Barckhoff organ has been extensively repaired recently, thanks to the interest and generosity of Mrs. W. W. Ryder. On July 7, 1991, a concert was presented featuring the organ with both local and out-of-town musicians.

On December 1, 1922, New Bern suffered a disastrous fire which burned approximately 40 blocks, mostly in black residential areas. Damage amounted to more than $1,000,000. The fire burned up to St. Cyprian's Church, stopping just ahead of the corner of Johnson and Metcalf Streets. Afterward the church basement was turned into a hospital for black people. A baby boy born in the church during this emergency was named St. Cyprian's Emergency Dillahunt. This man returned to St. Cyprian's about 10 years ago to renew acquaintance with his birthplace.

The fire pointed up the great need for a hospital for blacks. At this time they were cared for in rooms in the basement of St. Luke's Hospital. The Reverend R. I. Johnson, then Rector of St. Cyprian's, began a campaign to raise funds for a hospital. He traveled north to such places as Philadelphia and New York City taking his message of need. Some 15 years after the fire Good Shepherd Hospital was opened on June 26, 1938. It was the only such institution for blacks within an 80-mile radius. The building at 603 West Street was erected on property left to the diocese by the Reverend Forbes, and the building and equipment cost about $70,000. Two years after the hospital opened it was free of debt. The Duke Endowment

Fund and the Pennsylvania Diocese, along with contributions from many individuals, made this possible. One member of St. Cyprian's remembers the selling of bricks to finance the hospital.

For a number of years the Reverend Johnson of St. Cyprian's was also administrator of Good Shepherd. Upon his death in 1946 Mr. O. T. Faison of Wilmington was chosen to replace him. For many years Dr. Lulu Disosway, a member of Christ Church, was the much beloved physician and surgeon at the hospital.

Good Shepherd Hospital remained in operation until the Craven County Hospital took over its services in 1964. The building was eventually sold to a black group who, after making extensive renovations, opened it as the Good Shepherd Home for the Aged.

After having enjoyed a large membership over the years the people at St. Cyprian's are concerned that their sons and daughters have moved to other parts of the country. So many of those who are left are "older adults", and they worry about who will carry on. This church which has been so long a part of the community and has been such a force for good surely will have a bright future.

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The author wishes to thank the people of St. Cyprian's Church, especially Dr. Samuel Bryan, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Donaldson, Mr. O. T. Faison, Dwight R. Z. Johnson, Lay Minister in Charge, and Mr. C. C. Stewart, for their help in providing information for this article, and to Dr. John Shannon for information about the organ.

# MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL WAR 1860-1865

As told by Addison P. Whitford
to his Grandson Larry A. Whitford 1910-1940

Editor's note: The following story is published virtually as received, even though some historians disagree with certain details in it. Readers may see the story as encouragement for recording events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

I volunteered in 1861 when I was 17 years old. My cousin John Whitford was Colonel of the 67th regiment. We were stationed at old Fort Brunswick south of Wilmington to defend the Cape Fear River. I was given the rank of lieutenant and was aide-de-camp to the Colonel.

We saw no action at Fort Brunswick for almost a year. I had time to ride about the country. I remember there was an old wall of an old brick church standing at the town site. There was a red cedar tree growing on the wall large enough that I climbed up it for some distance. I saw for the first time wetland rice growing. There was a system of dikes and gates so that the fields could be flooded to kill weeds in the rice fields. There were perhaps 100 slaves on the plantation [I believe this was Orton Plantation. L. A. W.] This was the first large plantation I had seen. My father had less than 10 Negroes (men, women, and children), and only one plantation north of Neuse River had as many as 25. I remember particularly a bunch of young Negro boys almost too young to work. They were all quartered together and were fed mostly rice. Once on a Sunday night I saw them given scraps of meat and leavings from the plantation

Sunday dinner. They fought over these scraps of meat like dogs. On my father's plantation the Negroes had always received almost the same food as the white folks, and my mother nursed the sick Negroes like they were her own children.

After Burnside began his advance in eastern North Carolina our regiment was moved to Craven County to help defend New Bern. We were in charge of the artillery. All the guns in the fort were fixed to fire across the river and could only be swung a short distance left and right. All, that is, except the two corner guns: these were swivel guns and could be swung in any direction. If all the guns had been swivel type, it might have made a difference in the way the battle went. I am not sure though. General Burnside had 15,000 troops and heavy artillery on his gunboats, while General Branch had less than 5,000. Very few of us, except some officers, had ever seen any action, and there were several companies of absolutely green militia.

The fort on the river was a well-constructed earthwork, and we had adequate ammunition and supplies. Extending south was also earth breastworks to the railroad and beyond. Our defense line ended at a swamp south of the railroad so we could not be flanked. East of the fort along the river and inland the trees had been cut. The criss-crossed logs afforded some protection to us against rapid advance.

The second week in March the Yankee gunboats came up the river and anchored out of range of the fort. We knew a battle was coming. On the afternoon of either March 12 or 13 the Colonel had me ride into town with dispatches to town officials and also letters to his family as to what to do if the fort fell. The only bridge across Trent River except the railroad bridge was five miles up river from New Bern. Someone had laid a walkway across the railroad bridge by putting two 12-inch boards between the rails.

My horse was well broken so I rode across the railroad bridge. I finished my business after dark and started back across the bridge. I was about halfway across when suddenly the train came around the curve from Morehead City and onto the bridge. The Yankees had already landed east of the fort and had fired on the train as it went by. It was going much faster than usual. My first thought was to leap off the horse into the river. Before I could act, my horse reared, whirled around and started back toward New Bern at a dead run. I couldn't get off now. I was sure the engineer couldn't see me or wouldn't stop in time. I could hear the train close behind. Then we passed the river shore and my horse leaped down the embankment, and I was safe. I knew there would be no more trains that night, but I still went back around by the wagon bridge up river.

The Yankees first started shelling the fort when they were almost out of range. Some of the shells and balls fell short and some didn't explode. In any case we were not harmed. We had good breastworks. Some of the boys were spoiling for a fight. When a shell would hit the top of the breastworks and roll inside, they would run after it and spit at it and curse. It's a wonder they didn't get blown up.

When the ships came into range of our guns, we began to really damage them. They soon found they couldn't pass and retreated down river out of range and began to land troops. They first tried a direct advance on the fort across the cleared area. The infantry fired on them, but we also turned our two swivel guns that way and used grapeshot and canister on them. They soon had to retreat. I later talked to a man who had walked over the field that evening. He said the dead Yankees were so thick you could have almost stepped from one to another.

The next attack was made farther south out of range of our swivel guns. During the first

attack the gunboats kept up their shelling of the fort. They did some damage to the breastworks. During the worst of the battle I was sent with a detail of men to a storage shed south of the fort to get shovels to repair the breastworks. It was the only time I was under heavy fire. You could hear the minie balls going by a dozen at a time and squealing when they bounced off the trees. At first I ran dodging from tree to tree, but then I thought that if I was going to be hit, I was going to be hit, so I walked on to the shed in the open. We got our tools, but several bullets went through the shack while we were inside.

Our men stood the attack well for a time, but the worst of it came against the center of the infantry line where it was held by green militia. They broke and run. This left us open to a flank attack. Our breastworks were not so good away from the river: we had only two pieces of artillery, the swivel guns, we could use on them, so General Branch decided to retreat. The retreat was rapid but orderly. We spiked all guns so they couldn't be fired again by driving a case-hardened rattail file into the touch-hole with a sledge hammer. We also blew up most of our ammunition.

We retreated across Trent River and on up toward Kinston as the Yankees advanced. Our regiment became an infantry regiment and did only skirmish and scout duty for the rest of the war. The Yankees wanted to advance inland and cut the railroad from Wilmington to Richmond. There were fights near Kinston and south of Goldsboro. That winter I was stationed in a camp at Goldsboro. I had only been as far away as Wilmington and Goldsboro up to that time. One cold night I was on outpost duty at a sawmill near Goldsboro. We burrowed into the sawdust to help keep warm. The next morning we were covered with several inches of snow. It is the only time I ever spent a night out in the

front door where they could see him and was immediately captured. If we had kept quiet it was ten to one they would have passed on by. I was caught inside with no escape so I stepped in the wide chimney and got up on the pot poles that were always put across for hanging pots on. The Yankee came in and looked around and said, "Well, I guess that's all of them." Suddenly, a little six-year-old spoke up and said, "There's one more in the chimney." So I was captured.

I was put in a camp near Richmond at first. I first saw rocks in the James River and rapids flowing over them. I was later moved to a prison camp at Point Lookout, Maryland, between the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. In warm weather we were allowed to swim at the point, because the bay was perhaps 30 miles across and the river ten. Several times prisoners swam way out in the river and circled back upriver past the guards. In almost every case Yankee sympathizers spotted and reported them. One day, however, a real good swimmer announced he was tired of prison life; he set out straight across the Potomac and swam out of sight. We never heard whether he made it, drowned, or made it upriver past the guards. In a few months I was exchanged, and when I got home I joined my old company in north Craven County.

The time I was almost captured was also in Vanceboro. I was riding south through the town when a Yankee patrol came around the curve in the road ahead. I spurred my horse to the right toward the creek. When he reached the bank, he was going too fast to stop. When he leaped in, we both went under and came up halfway across. The Yankees were shooting at me with pistols before we reached the south bank, but I was not hit and got away.

The second time I was captured I was caught off my horse by a cavalry patrol. I ran out in a field and hid in a ditch. I thought I was going to get away, but a Yankee spotted me and

rode up and captured me. This time I was sent farther north. I was imprisoned at Fort Delaware on the Delaware River near New Castle. The first winter was a cold one. We were not given adequate food and allowed only one blanket in reprisal for treatment of Yankee prisoners in Southern camps. Some of the prisoners were from wealthy families, and they received money through the lines from home. They were given only script to spend, but they could buy extra blankets and food from the store in the prison. I received no money, but since we had to do our laundry I did the laundry for well-to-do prisoners and earned enough to buy an extra blanket and food. When they had the first inspection, I lost my extra blanket. Then I heard that sympathetic guards always passed along word of an inspection, so I pulled up a board in the floor under my bunk and hid my blanket there before each inspection.

I had to cook the food I bought, and wood was scarce. We were always scrounging for wood. We were allowed to get within 20 feet of the fence. One day when the guard was farther along, I was prying out a piece of wood almost under the fence when I looked up to see the guard with his rifle on me. He could have shot me, but he merely said, "Johnny, reach a little farther. There's a nice stick under the fence." When I got it, he made me move away again.

Lee surrendered in April; I was released sometime in July. I got home just in time to enjoy the first roastin' ears. At home things were not good. All our slaves except one or two old ones had run away to the Yankees. The old ones stayed with us for keep and an occasional dollar until they died. Brother Bryan was just a boy. All my other brothers had been in the army. Only one, Nathan, was wounded. He had a bone shattered in his leg. They saved the leg, but it troubled him all his life. Father had joined the home-guard militia late in the war,

although he was over 50.

Periodically both Confederates and Yankees came by the plantation. They took all livestock and most of the other food like salt meat and corn. Once both Yankees and Confederates had been in skirmishes, and they took most of Ma's linens for bandages. We kept our cattle and hogs hidden in pastures in the woods. Once Bryan heard the Yankees coming. He had one young mule in the barnyard at the house. He had time to open the gate and drive the mule out. The mule was never captured. One Yankee swore he would get him, but he run himself out without success.

One of the old slaves kept a musket or two hidden in a hollow tree. He would hunt and bring in an occasional deer or other game to supplement the meager food supply.

Near the war's end Confederate money was practically worthless, but prices were sky-high. Besides, there was little to buy. After I returned, Father moved up into the swamp where he had built a house and left the house at the old Whitford mill. I began to tap pines for turpentine to make a little cash. I was married before 1870 and moved into the old place at the mill. The mill was never in use after the war. Some years later I moved in with Father and lived there until after he died. I built my first house, a log cabin, after Brother Bryan was married and about the time my boy Dave was born.

# THE NEW BERN ACADEMY MUSEUM

Virginia Kirwan

One of the few remaining Federal-style public buildings in the entire state, this edifice is renowned for having housed the New Bern Academy, the first school in North Carolina to have been established by law. Its founding as an educational institution in 1764 ranks it as one of the oldest secondary schools in the nation. After the 1766 frame building was destroyed by fire in 1790 the school had temporary quarters at Tryon Palace until it too fell victim to fire in 1798. The east wing of the palace, which survived the conflagration, hosted this pedagogical endeavor until the structure with which we are familiar was completed in 1810.

The Academy was considered to be a free public school for white students. Money used to defray educational expenses came from a variety of sources, among them public funding provided by legislation, contributions from missionary societies, a state lottery, and duty from liquor imported at the port of New Bern.

The task of constructing the New Bern Academy was probably under the supervision of John Dewey. Built of hard-fired brick laid in Flemish bond, the completely symmetrical five-bay, two-story building has a hipped roof and a slightly forward-projecting central pedimented pavilion which is penetrated by an oculus. Removed in the late 1800's, and now reconstructed, the initial semicircular four-column portico with elaborate Doric entablature sheltering a sidelighted entrance is capped by a gauged relieving arch above a semi-eliptical fanlight.


DONNELL PORTICO STANDS IN MUSEUM. Tryon Palace photo.

which show influences of Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, and Victorian styles. Hardy B. Lane is depicted as an exemplary builder, and Herbert Woodley Simpson is proclaimed as an outstanding architect.

Highlighting this entire presentation is the restored portico from the Judge John R. Donnell House. Looking upon this 13-foot-high structure one has little difficulty in visualizing the elegance of the home to which it served as an entrance. This Federal brick side-hall home was located on North Craven Street at the present site of the Bernside Apartments. Built in 1818 by Asa King, the home contained interior woodwork comparable to that found in the Jones-Jarvis and Eli Smallwood Houses and the Lodge Room at St. John's Lodge No. 3. After a devastating fire in the early 1970's much of the interior woodwork and the undamaged portico were sold to Dr. Hal Chaplin of Charlotte. The remainder of the building was demolished!

Dr. Chaplin's plans for using the portico did not materialize, and early in 1985 he gave it to the New Bern Historical Society. It was brought back to New Bern on an open-bed truck by John Green and Peter Sandbeck. The Board of Directors of the society voted to present the portico to the Tryon Palace Commission as a gift, thus making possible its inclusion in the architectural part of this exhibit.

The CIVIL WAR ROOM shows New Bern as a "Union City in the Midst of the Confederacy". Phases of the war such as coastal defenses, financial problems, supply-line strategy, Burnside occupation, hospitals, and freed slaves are depicted through maps, illustrations, and artifacts. Uniforms and a Confederate flag are on loan from the North Carolina State Museum of History. A model of a hospital room is shown.

The EDUCATION ROOM exhibit begins with education in New Bern prior to the opening of the academy. The early years of the academy are

portrayed by textbook photographs, a cipher book, a plan of Palace Square, a portrait of Mary Bayard Clarke, an 1879 typewriter, and William E. Clarke's RULES FOR MY GUIDANCE IN TEACHING. John A. Attmore's class is pictured using Lancaster's reading methodology. Table-high sandboxes in which students drew their letters are displayed to explain early teaching procedures. Scientific equipment is also shown.

A portrait of William Gaston hangs in this room, indicative of his life-long association with the academy, both as a student and later as a trustee. Gaston's distinguished career involved service in the North Carolina House of Commons, the North Carolina Senate, the United States House of Representatives, and the North Carolina Supreme Court.

The New Bern Academy, having become a part of the New Bern City Schools in 1882, served as an educational institution until 1971, except for the period of its use as a hospital during the occupation of New Bern. The list of its alumni and trustees who have been influential in North Carolina and United States history as well as that of New Bern throughout these many years is long and impressive. How fitting it is that the New Bern Academy, after 225 years, will continue to serve not only the educational community but also those residents and visitors who thirst for the knowledge of New Bern's past!

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## BOOK REVIEW

JAMES CITY: A BLACK COMMUNITY IN NORTH CAROLINA 1863-1900, by Joe A. Mobley. (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1981. Footnotes, illustrations, index, statistical tables. 109 pp. Paper, $4.00.)

This slim volume, published a decade ago, presents an account of a community established to meet a critical need in a period of chaos. After Union forces under the command of General Ambrose Burnside won the battle of New Bern in March 1862 black slave families in North Carolina felt a sense of freedom and fled their masters and overseers. Many arrived in New Bern in desperate need of food and shelter. Joe Mobley relates how James City evolved and sketches some of the personalities involved. Footnotes, more than 70 for one chapter alone, will enable those seeking detail to pursue the subject more thoroughly.

Interest in James City history has been renewed recently and has prompted Grace George, who was born there and recently returned after a long absence, to form an organization with ambitious plans to construct a museum. Attention has also been drawn to the area by the expansion plans of the Craven County Regional Airport into an area where several gravesites of James City pioneers are located.

Once the Union forces occupying New Bern saw the enormous numbers of black, and white, refugees, they were forced to make hasty arrangements for food and shelter. This mass movement seems to have been totally unexpected, and

General Burnside quickly appointed Vincent Collyer to the position of Superintendent of the Poor, with responsibility to provide for all refugees. How he managed this under extremely difficult conditions is what Mobley attempts to answer. In a town already jammed with Union troops who occupied all the habitable buildings and consumed vast amounts of food, Collyer had no easy task.

Gradually a plan evolved to create a separate community on the southeast bank of the Trent River, close to its junction with the Neuse. It seemed to be the solution that suited both the troops and the refugees, who appeared to have some suspicions of one another. While the problems of food and housing were partially solved, others cropped up, such as caring for the sick, transportation, education, and religious worship. Not an easy assignment, but one that Collyer managed in a more or less satisfactory manner.

Life for the residents of the settlement appears to have been confusing at first, but as the summer months rolled by and shelters were constructed, life settled into more comfortable conditions. But other concerns became evident. The refugees needed gainful employment or a means of making a living. Many were put to work strengthening the Union defense works around New Bern and for the first time received wages. Others opened shops or set out gardens and in one way or another became productive. Some of the more intrepid blacks took great risks in becoming spies for the Union. They seemed to be able to penetrate the Confederate lines, travel long distances and return, without being questioned by the Confederates.

When Burnside was called back to Washington in the summer of 1862, Collyer went with him, and James Means succeeded to Collyer's former position. Means suffered an attack of yellow fever and died shortly afterward. General John