Journal of the New Bern Historical Society

Volume XVI, No. 2 November 2003

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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION, INC.

The *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society* is a semiannual publication of the New Bern Historical Society, a non-profit 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 or nbhistoricalsoc@connect.net)

NEW BERN'S ATLANTIC AND NORTH CAROLINA RAILROAD: ANTEBELLUM AND CIVIL WAR YEARS

Julie Hipps

Early nineteenth century New Bern reigned supreme among North Carolina ports, commanding market vitality and burgeoning commerce. Unfortunately, shallow waterways, precarious swashes or bars, and hazardous shoals impeded entrepreneurial and mercantile dominance. Unnavigable, eight-foot deep channels compelled crews to transfer cargo from larger vessels to lighters, or smaller boats and flats, as steamers supplanted sailboats in ocean trade. This exchange increased shipping time, danger, inconvenience, and cost. Consequently, larger ocean-going vessels favored metropolitan, deepwater ports and commercial hubs.

In 1827 New Bern's stagnant economy plummeted, and the town confronted depression. Real estate declined, banks lacked patronage, and the town's most talented, ambitious, and progressive citizens migrated to more promising locales. In 1840 Wilmington superceded New Bern's mercantile supremacy, and New Bern suffered population attrition. In 1843 two fires exacerbated New Bern's financial woes. In April fire destroyed every structure on both sides of Pollock Street between East Front Street and Craven Street. In October, 13 store houses or common structures on Craven Street and Pollock Street succumbed to flames.

An outside market for naval stores bolstered New Bern's economy in mid-1840. Rubber goods and lighting fuel manufacturing generated unexpected rosin and distilled turpentine markets. Persisting until the Civil War,

renewed naval stores demand engendered New Bern prosperity. Turpentine distilleries dotted the Neuse River, while steamboats towed massive flats stacked with barrels of naval stores from Craven, Wayne, Johnston, Lenoir, and Greene counties. Riverside distilleries disgruntled homeowner Samuel Simpson, goading him to sue distillers Alexander and John R. Justice. Simpson endeavored to shut down Justice's distillery located just north of his property. Arguing that distillery smoke, soot, odor, and noise hindered enjoyment of his home, Simpson lost his case. Meanwhile, George Allen's tannery and John Blackwell's steam sawmill profited. Other New Bern entrepreneurs manufactured building components. Proprietors Alonzo J. Willis and George Bishop mass-produced window sashes, blinds, panel doors, window and door casings, moldings, and window frames. New Bern's large new brick factory prospered, and New Bern Gas Works illuminated streets, stores, offices, and private domiciles. New Bern citizens marveled at these accomplishments and relished their entry into the "age of progress."[1]

New Bern's resurgence merited region-wide recognition. According to the *Norfolk Herald,*

> "Newbern is no longer what she was, but has started ahead of her sister towns in North Carolina, and is at this day an enterprising, go-ahead, thriving and flourishing city. . . . What in the world, it may be enquired, has given Newbern such an impulse? The question is readily answered: She has connected herself by a railroad to the interior of the State."[2]

The railroad not only jump-started New Bern's economy, it revolutionized the transportation industry. Eng-

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[1]*New Bern Weekly Progress*, September 24, 1859.

[2]Peter B. Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina* (New Bern: The Tryon Palace Commission, 1988), 99.

land boasted the first steam railroad engine in 1825, and shortly thereafter farsighted North Carolinians pinpointed railways as a potential economic panacea. In 1828, the Reverend Dr. Joseph Caldwell, president of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, wrote a series of articles advocating a rail line linking Beaufort, New Bern, Raleigh, and Tennessee. He recommended state poll taxes and individual stock subscriptions to finance the endeavor, promising augmented New Bern and Beaufort trade. Railroad promoters convinced North Carolinians that railroads boosted land values, farm production, town development, trade, factories, prosperity, and state revenue, and facilitated travel and postal service. Slashing old wagon freight rates, railroads encouraged surplus crop marketing, contributed to farm profit, and cut purchased goods prices. Consequently, almost every town and community in North Carolina coveted a railroad, yet disavowed responsibility for construction expenses.

Craven County citizens caught railroad fever in 1828. Heartened by progress in other states, John H. Bryan presided at an assembly to discuss railroad construction. The delegates resolved to elicit a central line. William Gaston, Matthias Manly, Edward E. Graham, William Blackledge, Charles G. Spaight, and John P. Daves pledged to secure railroad plans. Stung by the recent depression, opposition balked at expenditures. As Gaston, Bryan, Manly, John Washington, and Edward Stanly, bolstered by the *Spectator*, promoted railroad construction, financial obstacles discouraged serious consideration. Committed to internal improvements, Tarheel leaders touted railroads. Governor John Motley Morehead tagged railroads North Carolina's "Tree of Life." Reassured by Wilmington's successful line, and compelled to reinvigorate New Bern's lagging economy, the *New Bernian* published a series of essays in 1849 urging railroad construction. Concerned New Bernians convened on June 7, 1849, and determined to offer local railroad subscription, but low sales disappointed railroad proponents.

Railroad construction dominated political rhetoric in 1849. Whig and Democrat politicians predicted economic turn-about and entry into mainstream culture and society. Staunch bipartisan railroad backers ran an 1850 fusion ticket endorsing Whig William Wadsworth for state senate, Whig Alonzo T. Jerkins for House of Commons, and democrat George S. Stevenson for House of Commons. Attempting to gauge public commitment to the railroad, the county court put a controversial $150,000 bond referendum to vote in March of 1854. New Bern harbored pockets of opposition to railroads and indebtedness. Town voters reneged on a bond subscription favoring a Neuse River and Navigation Company dam and dredging operations, yet an overwhelming majority passed the railroad referendum.

The state chartered the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad in 1855, pledging two thirds of the capital outlay of $1,600,000. Atlantic and North Carolina solicited contractor's proposals in mid-March for

> grading, bridging, masonry and superstructure including the iron (the plan of Rail to be furnished by the Company of 60 pounds to the yard) of those sections of the Road between Kinston and Newbern.[3]

Locals toasted the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad's future at Odd Fellows Hall on February 7, 1855, and anticipated

> the speedy introduction into our midst of man's greatest invention, the locomotive, which adds strength and power to speed, to speed wealth and commerce, activity and a spirit of enterprise and industry.[4]

The advent of the railroad sparked a progressive spirit

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[3] *New Bern Journal,* March 15, 1855.

[4] *New Bern Journal,* September 25, 1855.

as New Bernians rallied behind civic improvements, and the town sustained two respected newspapers. Christ Episcopal Church deeded Cedar Grove Cemetery to the town of New Bern; shortly thereafter town commissioners installed a stately marl wall and entrance arch, to protect the cemetery from wandering livestock.

Atlantic and North Carolina stockholders organized in 1854. The group elected President John D. Whitford and officers Edward R. Stanly, R. N. Taylor, Alonzo T. Jerkins, Frederick P. Latham, William P. Moore, George Green, and George S. Stevenson. Locals hoped the railroad "would give such an impulse to trade and commerce, as would speedily elevate [New Bern] to an enviable position among her sister towns, and send her on her way."[5] Groundbreaking ceremonies on March 6, 1855, initiated construction. On December 13, 1856, with three quarters of the grading completed, 4,000 tons of rail procured, and track within 16 miles of New Bern, engineers readied two locomotives, "Gov. Brass" and "Charles F. Fisher" and 18 freight and gravel cars.

Between 1854 and 1858, New Bernians financed and constructed a major wooden truss bridge to carry Hancock Street tracks across the Trent River. The first train traversed the Trent River Bridge on February 25, 1858, with 200-300 men aboard. Cheering citizens flocked to the inaugural run, decking the bridge and train with flags, and firing cannons.

The present day railroad trestle still rests upon nineteenth century brick and granite piers supported under water by piling driven into the river bottom to anchor square wooden timber foundations. The original finished granite coping caps piers and abutments, and wrought-iron tie rods connect present-day trusses and bridge superstructure. According to Mrs. L. W. Wood,

"the [first] bridge was one of the old-fashioned

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[5] *New Bern Journal*, September 25, 1855.

wooden covered types. . . . It had a railroad track down the center, with foot paths on each side. On each side were five or six arches covered with metal. It stood about where the present railroad bridge is located."[6]

On April 29, 1858, 97 miles of track linked Morehead City, New Bern, Kinston and Goldsboro with connections to Charlotte and points east and west. New Bernians rejoiced. "The single most festive occasion in New Bern during the antebellum period was the celebration of the completion of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad."[7] Fifty-one committee members planned the festivities. John D. Whitford chaired the celebratory ball subcommittee, Charles C. Clark led the speaker subcommittee, and William H. Oliver chaired the entertainment subcommittee. Oliver tackled food preparation and service for locals and nearly 8,000 guests. He procured white granite plates and cutlery from New York, later to recoup expenses via sale at auction. Oliver ordered 2,000 pounds of fresh meat and 1,000 bushels of oysters. He completed the menu with a boatload of sweet potatoes, barrels of crackers, Sebastian Bangert's freshly baked bread, peach pies, apple pies, and other delectable local donations. He also supplied ample champagne, whiskey, and scuppernong wine.

Pleasant sunshine greeted the day, as dignitaries and militia companies graced the town. Sunrise 13-gun salutes and chiming bells inaugurated the jubilee. Gunmen continued to discharge their weapons every quarter-hour, with supplemental noon and sunset 13-gun salutes. After reveille, militias paraded and performed maneuvers at Academy Green and railroad depot commons. Military companies led a cortege through town, and all assembled at Academy Green for speeches by the Reverend Francis L.

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[6] Sandbeck, 384.

[7] Alan D. Watson, *A History of New Bern and Craven County* (New Bern: Tryon Palace Commission, 1987), 367.

Hawks and Henry W. Miller, and a Navy band performance. The procession reassembled, promenaded to the railroad machine shop, and enjoyed a noon meal. The gala closed with a banquet in the shop, and the evening culminated with a ball. Held in the railroad depot, it featured polkas, waltzes, and other popular dances. One week later, on June 7, travelers enjoyed the rails from Goldsboro to Beaufort. With obstacles to growth and prosperity removed, New Bernians looked confidently toward better times.

The Atlantic and North Carolina line ushered in repair and building shops, foundry and roundhouse construction. This railroad complex, located north of Queen Street adjacent to the Neuse River, blossomed into a major operation and employer. The town population and area expanded. The 1858-1859 legislatures annexed the tract north of Queen Street to Cedar, Cypress, and Attmore streets, including the cemetery, railroad complex, and Reizensteinville, bordered by West, End and Cedar streets. New Bern industry and business flourished. The Atlantic and North Carolina surfaced as a major industrial employer, and turpentine production thrived as well.

In 1860 New Bern sustained 19 turpentine distilleries, two major sawmills, a marine railway and shipyard, a cotton-spinning factory, three cooper's shops, one coppersmith factory, one tin ware factory, and two sash and blind factories. Bolstered by the favorable commercial climate, forward-looking New Bernians diversified. Capitalizing on local cotton production, Edward R. Stanly and Dr. John A. Guion founded the New Berne Steam Cotton Mill, employed six men and 25 women, and generated 146,000 pounds of spun cotton.

The rails engendered an enterprising spirit as New Bernians upgraded their homes, built new domiciles, and invested in commercial property. Alonzo T. Jerkins invested in rental property on north Queen Street known as Cottage Row. Adjacent to the Atlantic and North Carolina depot, foundry, and shops, Cottage Row likely housed

railroad employees. Jerkins also speculated in property along Griffith Street, now known as North Craven Street, and played a crucial role in incorporating this area into city limits. J. M. F. Harrison erected a three-story brick store on Pollock Street. Dr. Chapman made valuable improvements to his premises; Dr. Hooker built an elegant office; and George S. Stevenson, Esq., refitted his dwelling and constructed a new, neat law office.[8]

The Atlantic and North Carolina line sparked major advances in countywide transportation services, providing farmers and naval store distributors with speedy, efficient, and cheap overland freightage. Core Creek, Croatan, Dover, Havelock, Tuscarora, and other agricultural communities sprouted along the Atlantic and North Carolina rails. In 1859 the railroad ran regularly between Goldsboro and Morehead via New Bern and catered to military companies and excursion groups. Delegates to the 1859 democratic convention in New Bern chartered the line, and 100 Methodist Sunday school children reserved the train for a Morehead City trip. The rails augmented mail services, compelling New Bern's post office to add 90 boxes. The Atlantic and North Carolina carried daily mail from northern, western, and Beaufort depots, as well as tri-weekly deliveries from Washington, and bi-weekly posts from Trenton and Swansboro.

The Atlantic and North Carolina suffered vandalism, as did other North Carolina lines. Pranksters positioned timbers across tracks or meddled with switches, precipitating train derailment. The Atlantic and North Carolina eluded serious mishaps, but an 1867 accident and ghost haunted Wilmington's Atlantic Coast Railroad. Approaching Maco Station, a tiny whistle-stop 14 miles west of Wilmington, Conductor Joe Baldwin manned the caboose. Almost imperceptibly, Baldwin's train slowed. The conductor surveyed the situation and, to his dismay, discovered his car uncoupled and freed from the train. With an-

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[8] *New Bern Weekly Progress*, March 13, 1860.

other locomotive overtaking Baldwin's nearly stationary caboose, he frantically and futilely signaled with his lantern. The onrushing train destroyed the caboose and decapitated Baldwin, as his lantern catapulted across the night sky. "Joe Baldwin's Light" habitually visited Maco's night sky. President Grover Cleveland reported the phenomenon in 1895, as locals explained Joe Baldwin's eternal search for his head.

With the country on the verge of Civil War, New Bern relished her renewed affluence, agriculture, industry, and commerce. "An enterprising spirit seemed to have been awakened by the prospect of the 'wand-like influence of that great renovator, the railroad.'"[9] The town's prosperity, optimism, and progressive spark dissipated on March 14, 1862, as General Ambrose Burnside and Union troops captured New Bern. In an unauthorized effort to sour Yankee victory, the retreating Confederate soldiers set the town ablaze, igniting cotton bales and rosin barrels. As the final Confederate crossed the Trent River Bridge, soldiers ignited the 1500-foot span.

The Federals ferried across the Trent via steamer to encounter tumult and confusion as frightened, bewildered, and panic-stricken locals evacuated. White surrender flags flapped in the breeze; New Bernians vacated their homes, doors gaping wide open; and Confederate soldiers abandoned tack, bedding, tents, and love letters. Meanwhile blacks celebrated, frolicked, prayed, pillaged, and looted. Circumspect townspeople flocked to train cars, prepared for hasty exodus. When loaded cars pulled away, unhappy stragglers discovered several uncoupled cars. The Moses Griffin Free School and Principal Arete Ellis sheltered and tended to stranded New Bernians until General Burnside permitted departure.

Eager to control the Atlantic and North Carolina, General Burnside dispatched Union soldiers to Beaufort. Lacking a railroad bridge disgruntled Federals deployed hand-

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[9]Watson, 293.

cars on their five-hour commutes to the coast. Burnside hired refugee slaves, or contrabands, to construct Fort Totten and other local fortifications. Former slaves also worked the docks for quartermaster and ordnance departments and as bridge builders. With the Trent bridge rebuilt by June 1862, the Atlantic and North Carolina converted to a military railroad. Administered by negligent Union soldiers, the railroad degenerated. In February 1865 the Quartermaster General relinquished the Atlantic and North Carolina to the United States Military Railroad Department. The Railroad Department prolonged the Army's slipshod and cut-rate maintenance.

The advent of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad in New Bern accelerated the tempo of transportation, thereby stimulating manufacturing, economic progress, and rural development. It generated civic pride, optimism, entrepreneurial ventures, and affluence. In 1860 the *New Bern Journal* boasted:

> We are happy to say that a spirit of enterprise has at last been awakened in our beloved but neglected old town; and now that the last obstacle has been removed which retarded her growth and prosperity, we confidently look for better times.[10]

Civil War onslaught shattered the progressive energy, self-assurance, wealth, and hopefulness that had accompanied the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad.

GLOSSARY

Abutment A structure built to support the lateral pressure of an arch or span at the ends of a bridge.

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[10] *New Bern Journal*, March 14, 1860.

Coping The top, typically sloping, course of a brick or stone wall.

Pier A solid pillar, designed to sustain vertical pressure, supporting an arch or bridge.

Trestle An open braced framework used to support a bridge.

Truss A framework, typically consisting of rafters, posts, and struts, supporting a bridge.

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New Bern Journal.
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JAMES BRYAN'S JOURNAL

Kenneth H. Brinson

Several years ago I made a rare find in Chattanooga, Tennessee: a journal from a general merchandise concern located in New Bern, North Carolina, that had been purchased by the BLK Bookstore. The New Bern business was owned and operated by James Bryan and was located on Pollock Street across from Christ Episcopal Church. The years covered by the journal are 1794-1799. Bill Kirchner, owner of the bookstore, stated that he would accept offers to purchase the book. After a quick examination I felt certain that it should be returned to New Bern, and I agreed to contact the owner within a few days.

Upon returning home, I discussed my discovery with Victor Jones, Local History and Genealogical Librarian at the New Bern-Craven County Public Library. We decided to approach the Tryon Palace Commission to determine if they were interested in purchasing the journal. John Green, Registrar for the Commission at the time, replied that the Commission would be pleased to purchase the journal, have it restored, and house it at the Commission's office. The purchase was made soon afterwards.

During the past few months, I have been working with Victor Jones and Dean Knight, the present Registrar and Librarian of Tryon Palace, to have a copy of the journal made and to have the copy placed in the New Bern-Craven County Public Library. We wanted to give all interested parties, specifically historical researchers and genealogists, the opportunity to research the book without risking damage to the original document. R. Allen Humphrey joined our efforts and volunteered to make a photographic copy of the entire journal and put the data on

computer discs. These discs are now available in the Kellenberger Room of the New Bern-Craven County Public Library.

The journal measures 7 ½ " x 12 ½" x 1 ½" and contains 446 pages. Some portions of the first 50 pages have been damaged, but most of the entries are easily readable. During the restoration process all of the pages were encapsulated in rice paper. The overall condition of the book is good, but it should remain in proper storage with limited handling to maintain this condition.

Entries were made in the journal on a daily basis. The earliest entry was made in November 1794. The last entry was dated August 21, 1799. The clerk listed the names of the customers, what they purchased and/or sold, the price of the goods, and dates of the transactions. Consequently, over the years thousands of names were listed. An unduplicated count would reduce this number to hundreds. The table on the following page provides a few of the names listed that might be familiar to researchers and some current residents of this area.

In addition to operating the business in downtown New Bern, James Bryan oversaw the operations of several boats that exported and imported up and down the eastern coast of the newly formed United States of America. He personally owned several of these vessels. Names of some of the boats appearing in the journal are listed below.

Brigs	Schooners	Sloops
Chance	*Betsy*	*Charlotte*
North Carolina	*Henrietta*	*Friendship*
	Little John	*Hannah*
	New Bern	*Nancy*
	Polly	*Rainbow*

The journal reveals the following names of some of the captains of the boats: Elisha Brown, John Craddock, Wallace Delastius, James Harker, Seldon Jasper, Asa

SOME FAMILIAR NAMES APPEARING IN THE JOURNAL

John Austen
William Beck
William Becton
Ruben Bell
William Blackledge
Wilson Blount
Cason Brinson
Elizabeth Bryan
William Carravan
Joseph Carraway
Alexander Carruthers
Moses Caton
Samual Chapman
Joseph Crispan
John Daves
William Dixon
Nancy Ellis
Aaron Emul
Francis Fonnivelle
John Finley
Joshua Forbes
Levis Fulcher
Faniford Green
William Gibbs
Moses Gooding
Eunuce Hallings
John Hamilton
Daniel Humphrey
Thomas Ives
Ester Johnston
William Jones
Betsy Kelley
Lewis Lane
Joseph Lewis
Joseph Loftin
Thomas Lovick
Pierse Manning
Jeremiah Martin
James McKinley
Phillip Neale
John Nelson
Joseph Oliver
Edward Pasteur
Pierce Penville
James Potter
James Shackelford
William Shine
William Shade
Richard D. Spaight
William Sparrow
Thomas Speight
Jack Spencer
John Stanly
Wallace Stiron
Joseph Tagert
James Tooley
William Trippe
David Ward
John Washington
John West
Joseph Willis
Thomas York

Nelson, and Stephen West. Some appear by surname only as Captains Bartlette, Chadwick, Cook, Hataway, Hunley, Makre, and Shote.

Ports of call most frequently mentioned are Baltimore, New York, Norfolk, Philadelphia, and the West Indies. A selection of items believed to be exported or imported is listed on the next page.

The journal has returned to New Bern, its original home. It is currently housed at the Commission House at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens on Pollock Street, approximately 75 yards from where James Bryan lived 200 years ago.

Bryan purchased the lot in 1801 from Elizabeth Bartlett, and construction of the house began in 1803. It was not completed until 1806, and the Bryan heirs occupied it for many years. An office was built just east of the house about 1820. Today the house at 605 Pollock Street is the residence of Dr. John A. Snyder and his wife Michelle.

James Bryan was born on March 13, 1769, in the Adams Creek area of Craven County, North Carolina, and died on January 25, 1806. He is buried in the Cedar Grove Cemetery. James was the son of John Bryan and Elizabeth Oliver, the daughter of John Oliver and Mary Shine. John Bryan had been an officer in the North Carolina Militia and was killed by Tories on March 12, 1782. James's paternal grandparents were William Bryan, who died in 1746, and Anne Delamar Stoakey. James's great-grandparents were Edward Bryan, born in London in 1663, and Christian Council and Lucy Hardy. Edward lived in the Isle of Wight County, Virginia, until he moved to the Adams Creek area around 1700. He died in 1739.

James Bryan married Rachel Heritage on September 17, 1797. She was the daughter of John Heritage and Rachel Whitfield. James and Rachel were the parents of three children: John Heritage Bryan (1798-1870); James West Bryan (1805-1864); and Elizabeth, who died in infancy.

Many of the descendents of James and Rachel Bryan continue to live in and around Craven County,

SOME EXPORTS MENTIONED IN THE JOURNAL

Beef
Beeswax
Butter
Cords of wood
Corn
Deer skins
Fish
Ground pease (peanuts)
Honey
Lard
Lumber
Meal
Pitch
Pork
Rosin
Salt
Shingles
Spirits/turpentine
Tallow
Tar
Tobacco
Varnish

SOME IMPORTS MENTIONED IN THE JOURNAL

Allspice
Blankets
Buttons
Calico
Camphor
Gloves
Handkerchiefs
Hats
Hinges
Iron
Linen
Molasses
Muslin
Nankeen
Needles
Nutmeg
Pen knives
Plates
Powder
Ribbon
Rum
Saddle cloth
Shoes
Silk
Soap
Tea
Thimbles
Thread
Wine
Worsted hose

North Carolina. The family has contributed a great deal to the growth and development of eastern North Carolina. With the return of James Bryan's journal, kept at his New Bern business long ago, the contributions of the Bryan family will continue. The journal provides a wealth of historical and genealogical information to readers, researchers, and historians. It enables us to develop a greater appreciation of our history and heritage.

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BOOK REVIEW

Live Your Own Life. The Family Papers of Mary Bayard Clarke, 1854—1886, edited by Terrell Armistead Crow and Mary Moulton Barden. (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2003. lxii, 466 pp, ill.

Mary Bayard Clarke (MBC), whose family letters form the basis of this book, was born May 13, 1827, the fourth child and third of six daughters and one son of Thomas Pollock Devereux (1793-1869) and Catherine Ann Bayard Johnson (d. 1836), "who descended from a prominent New England family." All the children received an exceptional education from a northern tutor and experienced all the social niceties available to the well-to-do planter families throughout the South in the decades before the war. The difference in temperament, especially that of the girls, would be the deciding factor in how each one reacted to and coped with the vicissitudes encountered in their lives.

The eldest daughter Frances married a prominent lawyer, politician, and orator Henry Miller, and lived in Raleigh. When Miller died unexpectedly in 1862, Frances made the decision to open her house to boarders. The family was not supportive of this move, but it is hard to see how she could have done otherwise and managed to support herself and her children. However, Frances as the eldest child may have absorbed the philosophy of the feminine place in southern society. Perhaps in her mind, running a boardinghouse was merely an extension of being mistress of a plantation. It is interesting to note that Frances was the more outspoken of the sisters in condemning MBC's actions after the war when she wrote articles for northern newspapers and communicated freely with the

officers who were occupying Raleigh. The estrangement between the sisters lasted until Frances made some attempts at conciliation with Mary toward the end of her life.

Elizabeth, or Betsy, was born two years after Frances and plays a small part in this volume. Her marriage to Thomas F. Jones resulted in four children, but was seriously marred by a duel fought over her in 1846 during which her husband killed Dr. Daniel Johnson of their resident county, Perquimans. Following her husband's death in 1857, Betsy lived very quietly and relied on her children for support. She appears to have been one of the many "impoverished but respectable" southern ladies who managed to live through the war and for some years beyond. Betsy died in 1879.

The only son of Thomas Devereux, named John for Thomas's father, was born in 1819, educated at home and Yale, earned a law degree, and managed several estates and many slaves that he had inherited from his grandfather. John married into the prominent Mordecai family of Raleigh and served as Chief Quartermaster for North Carolina during the war. He must have served admirably as many historians have noted that North Carolina took better care of her soldiers than any other state. Following the war, which destroyed the wealth of so many southerners, John was saddled with his father's debt-ridden estate. He struggled to free the estate of its difficulties because the legacies to his sisters were dependent upon that estate.

The literary ability that was so evident in MBC was not confined to just one member of the family. *The Journal of a Sesech Lady* was written by Catherine Devereux Edmondston and published by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History in 1979. Kate was as well read and educated as Mary, however, she did not approve of Mary's writing for publication. Perhaps she was somewhat jealous of her sister's reputation, for she herself wrote poetry, and her *Journal* is full of choice phrases and opinions about people "in the news." Married to South Carolinian Patrick Edmondston, she was childless and followed

a more subservient role than her independent sister Mary. (Your reviewer would suggest that Kate's *Journal* be part of one's reading list about North Carolina in the Civil War.)

The tragedy that seemed to stalk the marriages of the Devereux sisters did not neglect Mary's two younger sisters Honoria (Nora), born in 1829, and Sophia, born 1833. Nora married Robert Cannon, a North Carolina physician. The family lived in Tennessee until Dr. Cannon was accidentally killed after the war. This left Nora with one son and four daughters to rear by herself. She left her son with her husband's relatives and took her daughters to Raleigh, staying with her sisters at different times. She found a position as a teacher at St. Mary's, an Episcopal female academy. Her daughters were then able to attend the school on scholarships. With her small salary and additional income from sewing and some writing projects, Nora became an independent woman and never looked back. When she returned to Somerville, Tennessee, she was the first woman in the state to be elected to public office when she was made Superintendent of Public Instruction for Fayette County in 1881.

Sophia married a notorious political figure, Josiah Turner, in 1856. Turner became a violent opponent of Radical Reconstruction and Republicans in the state following the war. With his purchase of the *Daily Sentinel* in Raleigh, he carried on his own war denouncing Republicans and their policies. While Sophie's childhood would appear (from her letters) to have been an unhappy one (her mother died when she was only three and she was raised by her father and his second wife), her married life could not have been much happier. During the 1870s she became addicted to morphine, and her husband committed her to Dorothea Dix insane asylum in Raleigh, where she died in 1880.

In 1848 Mary Bayard married a friend from Raleigh, William J. Clarke. Although the book does not indicate the reasons, her father did not approve of the marriage and withheld his consent for a year. The couple was not mar-

Mary Bayard Clarke, 1827-1886
Photo by H. Rocker, ca. 1848, from an earlier daguerreotype.
Jacket illustration from the book. Barden Collection.

ried in North Carolina, but in Louisiana, shortly after Clarke returned from the Mexican War as a hero having been brevetted major for bravery. Her uncle Leonidas Polk, Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana and later Confederate General, performed the service. Some of her poems make oblique references to her unhappiness at her father's lack of support for the marriage and loneliness at being married away from her family.

William Clarke came from Raleigh's merchant class but earned a law degree from the state's prestigious university. Perhaps Thomas Devereux feared Clarke's interest and abilities in a military career, which was continued in the Confederate service where he served as Colonel of the 24th North Carolina Regiment. Politics may also have been an area of contention as Devereux was a Whig, as were many of the planter class, and Clarke was an ardent Democrat. His interests and abilities seemed to fit him for a position in politics, but regardless of his earnest desire to receive an appointment from the federal government, even going so far as to move to Cuba for an extended visit, his hopes were continually thwarted. Nevertheless the trip to Cuba in 1855 provided Mary with much material for exercising her writing talents. Many of her letters detailed the scenery, people, and political concerns of the country. These letters were later revised for publication in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. In deference to her father, she published under the *nom de plume* of Tenella. After his death she continued to use Tenella but also used other pseudonyms and her real name of Mrs. M. B. Clarke.

On their return from Cuba, the Clarkes determined to try their fortune in Texas and moved to San Antonio, where William planned to practice law with a New England relative, Oliver Cooke. Packing up their three Raleigh-born children (Frank, Willie, and Mary), they met with more troubles in San Antonio. The furniture was delayed for months, which exercised their improvisational abilities, and Clarke had to study Texas law before he could practice.

The town was an army post with such illustrious (or soon to become so) members as Robert E. Lee, Albert Sydney Johnston, Louis Wigfall, and others who were to play important roles in the future of the country. The threat of Indian raids, desperadoes, and lawlessness did not deter Mary Clarke or her children from living an outdoorsy existence that seemed to suit them well. But business problems continued to plague William, who had been appointed president of the San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Railway. As president, William attempted to garner investments from northern businessmen by going to New York City. Through a sense of honor perhaps, he refused to accept a salary from the fledgling organization. This noble gesture left his wife and children in dire financial straits in Texas. To get money to feed her three children Mary taught in a school run by their friend Cooke. She even wrote to her father for assistance, which he grudgingly gave. Their fourth child Thomas (who called himself Texas Tom) was born in 1858 in San Antonio.

It appears that Mary's family in North Carolina may have thought that William's separation from his family was caused by some incompatibility or lack of affection. Because Mary was attractive, intelligent, and witty, she had many male friends throughout her life. William was always supportive and wrote letters that indicate his continued love and respect for his wife and her abilities, as well as concern for her position:

> my heart is stirred within me when I think of the days of gloom which have passed over you, linked to my illstarred fortunes when they should have been all sunshine and flowers.

With the secession of Texas, William went to Montgomery, Alabama, to press his case for a commission. Due to the vagaries of the arrangements between the Confederacy and the individual states, it was often months before men received the commissions they requested. William's

predictions about the war are interesting to read with the advantage of hindsight that we have. As he did predict, however, he was sent to North Carolina to recruit, leaving Mary alone again in Texas. Although Mary's family did not seem to trust her judgment, William was always in her corner: "your husband's heart *surely surely unwaveringly* trusts in you." William was eventually commissioned Colonel of the 14th (which became the 24th) North Carolina Regiment of Infantry. And Mary and her children made the trip to North Carolina from Texas without him.

The largest portion of the letters in this volume is dated from the period of the war. William's letters to Mary are informative and upbeat with gossip about officers and mutual friends, praise for his regiment, and plans for the future. Mary's letters are mostly to her children with the occasional one to editors such as George Bagby of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Winters were frequently spent with William in camp, but summers were spent at Conneconara, one of her father's plantations.

As her children grow, we read of Mary's attempts to enroll them in schools that she can afford and that are in safe locations. She gives freely of advice and offers much of it in stories that are both informative and fun. In May of 1864 William is wounded at the battle of Drewry's Bluff, Virginia, and goes to Raleigh to recuperate. On his way back to his regiment, William and Oliver Cooke are captured in Virginia and sent to Fort Delaware, a notorious northern camp for southern officers.

With William's return from prison and the end of the war, the Clarkes returned to Raleigh and then New Bern. Mary's letters show her to be busily distributing her published writings to friends, such as Mary Custis Lee, and assisting others, such as Emily Mason of Virginia and Cornelia Phillips Spencer of North Carolina, in distributing and selling volumes of southern patriotic poetry to raise money to educate the orphan daughters of Confederate soldiers.

She also wrote extensively for magazines such as *Old*

Guard and *The Land We Love,* and kept scrapbooks of articles that she had written, often annotating them with additional notes that identified individuals and situations. Several of these articles are printed in their entirety and were, to me, some of the most interesting parts of this book. Reconstruction is a period of U. S. history that is difficult to understand because of the polarization of the sections of the country. The articles that appear in this volume help us to understand the depth of feeling "at the time." A particularly poignant essay written under one of Mary's pseudonyms, that of Stuart Leigh, was written at the request of Governor Vance to encourage southern women to admit defeat graciously and assist their men folk in bearing the burdens of occupation and Reconstruction. She wrote that she was "not pleading for him [the Union officer] but for you, pleading with you for yourself." She then states that the men of the former Confederacy

> do not ask you to compromise either your dignity or their pride. . . all they ask is that you will not, by a childish and useless exhibition of a natural and commendable feeling, sink your country still deeper in misery and render it ten times harder for them to struggle under the heavy load which God in his wisdom has seen fit to lay upon them. . . . [L]ook up to, and follow the example of our great and glorious General, Robert E. Lee. . . . Let him be your guide in defeat as he was your star in the hour of triumph; and like him, so act and speak as to wring from your conquerors, . . . that respect which generous spirits spontaneously yield to dignified misfortunes.

Some of her writings were in a "tongue in cheek" style, pieces in which she used "countrified" speech to portray "Betsey Bittersweet," a semi-literate North Carolinian. This series proved popular in the South and at least one article, portraying the interaction between Raleigh women and Union troops, appeared in the *New York Day Book* in

1867. Another one of the series, "The Union Washing Machine," was rejected by former Confederate General Daniel Harvey Hill, editor of *The Land We Love*, for being "too rebellious," but it is printed in this volume along with a poem on the same subject, which is most amusing.

Her letter (as Betsey Bittersweet) to the editor of the *Journal of the South*, describing the Constitutional Convention held in Raleigh, January to March of 1868, depicts the beginnings of the "white-supremacy" campaign. This "drawing of the color line" sent many a conservative Democrat into the Republican Party, fearing a resumption of hostilities. William Clarke had been active in the Conservatives for the years following the war, but his respect for the leadership declined with their pursuit of the color line and their defeat in the gubernatorial election of 1868. His "defection" to the Republican Party further alienated him from his Conservative in-laws. During the political crisis of 1869 to 1871, he was appointed to organize two regiments of militia by Governor Holden. Clarke commanded one of these regiments and went to Washington to secure federal aid from President Grant. Clarke returned to Raleigh to protect the arsenal.

When Republican Governor Holden arrested Josiah Turner, Clarke's brother-in-law, relationships in the family went from bad to worse. Turner, as editor of the *Sentinel*, had published constant attacks on the Governor and the Republicans in the state. Once freed by the courts, Turner returned to his continue his diatribes, including his brother-in-law in some of the attacks.

According to one note, Clarke succeeded Charles Randolph Thomas as Republican Judge on the North Carolina Superior Court after Thomas's resignation. Another note indicates that Holden appointed Clarke to the Superior Court to finish the unexpired term of Charles Lancaster. Regardless of the particulars, Clarke had, at last, his political appointment, but it entailed being away from home for weeks on end and was not very remunerative. His constant disappointments in life, including not being

reelected to the Superior Court in 1874, may have led to his becoming dependent on alcohol. Although he acquired the Clerk of Court office in Craven County, the struggle to make ends meet seemed to defeat him, but his letters to Mary were constant in his declarations of his love and concern for her and his children.

Mary Bayard Clarke continued to turn her hand at whatever came to pass in order to assist in raising her children and contributing to the family coffers. She went to Washington to secure information for a short biography of Zebulon Vance. While there she met and charmed many Republicans, including President Andrew Johnson. Her writing endeavors appear to have received more interest, and certainly were more financially rewarded, in the North than in her own section of the country. She wrote commentaries on women's positions in both areas of the country as she traveled widely. She worked with several women writers from Chicago to found a short-lived publishing venture. There she met Dr. Nathan W. Abbott, who encouraged and befriended Mary and several other women writers. The friendship continued when Mary returned to North Carolina; their letters contain discussions that cover the broadest of topics from religion to the place of women in the new society being formed post-bellum.

Her children continued to receive her utmost concern, even to the point of her acting as Cupid in encouraging a match between her widowed daughter and a Vermonter in New Bern. Her philosophy of child rearing was expressed well in a letter to her son Willie, who appears to have been a special favorite. She states that she

> loved all her children *differently*, and I am glad to say that they all have distinct individualities and what I say to one is not intended to be stereotyped for the benefit of the family, you all feel that you can say things to Mother you wont say to anyone else and I am not going to be cheated of rights and intend to feel that I can say and write things to you that I would not

> tell Frank and Mary and ditto, ditto, ditto. You don't all look alike and it is not strange you should not feel alike, think alike, and act alike, you three eldest are grown and though I may be a class or two a head of you in the school of life it does not follow that you are all to do and think as I do, I am intensely individual in my thoughts and sentiments but I don't set up for infallibility [sic] and insist on my children fitting into my nitch [sic] and I wish they would not try to put each other on to a Procrustean bed and insist on all thinking feeling and acting "as they ought to do" but would make up their minds to differ yet not disagree.
>
> Live your own life is my motto but I was brought up to think I ought to live some body elses [sic] life and must take my opinions—and feelings as I did my clothes when a child, they were cut and made properly and I must wear them—
>
> I have always tried to avoid this with you children. . . .

This philosophy certainly resonated with this reviewer and contributed to my admiration of Mary Clarke.

She was also a foremost proponent of women being allowed to enter those fields of endeavor for which their talents prepared them and to receive the same remuneration as the male members of such field. She traveled to New York and Philadelphia in 1876 to report on the Centennial celebration of America's existence. While in the North she met with publishers and investigated further contributions to the field of journalism. Indeed, she wrote an article for the *Inland Monthly Magazine* in 1877 that began: "There is no subject more interesting to the public, just at present, than the problem of woman." What a wonderful leading line! and one that I am sure drew in many readers. In this article, Mary Clarke expounds on women in journalism and describes the founding in Chicago of the first school of journalism for women. Two other equally

interesting articles are printed in the book that further describe her position as a women's advocate.

In 1879 she and her husband jointly edited and wrote for the Republican newspaper the *Signal*. While on a business trip for the newspaper, Mary wrote a touching letter to William that describes her concern about his drinking problem. Later in 1880 Mary was hired to edit the Oxford Orphan Asylum weekly paper, the *Orphan's Friend*. When she pointed out some management shortcomings of the superintendent John H. Mills, he fired her. She took her grievances into print and a "war of words" resulted with Mills stooping to personal attacks. The feud continued in the pages of the *Farmer and Mechanic* of Raleigh. Mary Clarke's premise was that the young girls in the Asylum were taught no skills by which they might earn their daily bread. This was a continuing concern to her throughout her life.

Clarke also took umbrage in a review of a book by the Reverend Morgan Dix regarding the rightful place of women in American society. In contrast to Reverend Dix's book, she also reviews a book by a cousin, Lillie Devereux Blake, that takes the opposite tack. This review, also published in its entirety, makes it quite clear where Mary Clarke stands on women's issues of the day. Lillie Blake was a Suffragette, which Mary Clarke never was, although the editors propose that she might well have become one had she lived longer.

In the autumn of 1883, Mary Clarke suffered a stroke that left her paralyzed on the left side. In several letters to friends she bemoans her condition but accepts that she can never be the person that she was. Nevertheless, she orchestrates a marriage between her widowed daughter and a businessman from Vermont before she dies. His letters illustrate all too plainly his lack of education and culture, but Mary Clarke was nothing if not a practical woman. She realized that her daughter, not having had an education that would prepare her to earn a living to raise her two young children, would need a husband. With this last

detail taken care of, Mary Bayard Clarke died the end of March 1886, in New Bern, at age 58.

An independent thinker in an age when women were expected to be only wives and mothers (important enough jobs in their own right), Mary Bayard Clarke helped to support her family both during and after the Civil War by writing articles, poetry, and essays, and made a name for herself as an advocate of women in the professions, particularly that of journalism.

Lynda de Nijs