

Educational Resources

Places to Go!

- [Bennett Place State Historic Site](#)
- [Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site](#)
- [CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretative Center](#)
- [Fort Fisher State Historic Site](#)
- [Fort Macon State Park](#)
- [Historic Stagville](#)
- [North Carolina Museum of History](#)

Things to Do!

- From Beyond The Exhibits, the K-12 Outreach Branch of the North Carolina Museum of History
 - Activity excerpt from [History-In-a-Box](#) kit, *Tumultuous Times: Antebellum to Reconstruction in North Carolina (1830-1877)*
 - *Civil War Stories* [Distance Learning](#) Class
 - Spring 2023 issue of *Tar Heel Junior Historian* Magazine
- From CSS Neuse
 - History of the CSS Neuse
 - North Carolina Ironclads
 - Ships of North Carolina
- From Fort Fisher
 - Educator's Resource Guide

Explore!

- [Tour the State Capitol in 360°](#) or [arrange an In-Person visit!](#)
- Learn more about the [Civil War](#) through the North Carolina Museum of History's virtual student tour of [The Story of North Carolina](#).



TUMULTUOUS TIMES:

Antebellum to Reconstruction
in North Carolina (1830–1877)

EXCERPT FROM LESSON 6: SOLDIERING

Vocabulary

1. **arsenal**: an establishment for the manufacture or storage of arms and military equipment
2. **court-martial**: a court consisting of commissioned officers and in some instances enlisted personnel for the trial of members of the armed forces or others within its jurisdiction
3. **desertion**: the abandonment without consent or legal justification of a person, post, or relationship and the associated duties and obligations
4. **fortification**: a defensive wall or other reinforcement built to strengthen a place against attack
5. **haversack**: a small, sturdy bag carried on the back or over the shoulder, used especially by soldiers
6. **infantryman**: a soldier trained, armed, and equipped to fight on foot
7. **kepi**: a military cap with a round, flat top usually sloping toward the front and having a visor
8. **latrine**: a receptacle (such as a pit in the earth) for use as a toilet
9. **rations**: a fixed amount of a commodity (like food or cloth) officially allowed to each person during a time of shortage, as in wartime
10. **unsanitary**: unclean enough to endanger health

Objectives

- Students will appreciate the role music played for soldiers during the Civil War.
- Students will practice drum patterns played during the Civil War.
- Students will understand the skill needed to play under duress of war.

Time

One 50-minute session

Materials

- Snare drum
- Whiteboard and marker (optional)
- Access to YouTube videos (optional)

Procedure

- Ask students:
 - Without electronics including radios, how did Civil War military leaders send messages to soldiers over long distances? And during battle?
 - What would those messages express?
- Share background information about Civil War battles with students.
- Share additional information about music for Civil War military units:
 - Music was a prevalent part of life for people across social, economic, and racial lines during the Civil War period.
 - Music also played essential roles in the war effort, as a way to communicate, organize battle strategy, and as a source of comfort, entertainment, and community for soldiers.
 - Music existed for marches, battles, camp life, and rituals—from the start of a day to day’s end.
 - Military band members took on additional work in the armed forces, usually serving as medical corps. This entailed carrying injured soldiers on stretchers to medical tents, assisting with medical procedures, and gathering and burying the dead.
 - Official musicians in the military were generally divided into field musicians and members of military bands.
 - Field musicians included the buglers who accompanied the cavalry and infantry, as well as the fife-and-drum corps who were with the marching units.
 - Their music helped organize troop movement, like marching, and provided combat orders to soldiers trained to understand the sounds.
 - Additionally, their music sounded wake-up, lights-out, drills, and roll calls.
 - At times, boys as young as 12 enlisted as musicians, although many others were older.
 - Field musicians played fifes, snare (and bass) drums, and the bugle—similar to a trumpet but without keys or valves.
 - The larger bands played at various times, like during inspections, addresses to the troops, and at concerts.
 - Bands varied in size, with up to 24 members in some units. Instruments often included cornets (similar to trumpets), saxhorns (upright valved instruments), tubas, bass and snare drums, and woodwinds like fifes, piccolos, and clarinets.
 - In North Carolina, a military band of note was the 26th North Carolina Regimental Band, whose members consisted of men from Salem and part of the Moravian community there.



- Listen to drum signals! Try listening to these short demonstrations of Civil War drumming: <https://bit.ly/CivilWarDrummingDemo>.
- Make drumbeats!
 - While some Civil War drummers were trained musicians, others were taught by an experienced drummer. Practice and memorization were key to mastering the drumming techniques and signals.
 - Drummers learned a vocabulary of drumming, called rudiments, which allowed for uniformity and precision.
 - During the Civil War, 26 rudiments were in use; today, there are 40!
 - Practice a rudiment—flam.
 - Ask students to stand.
 - Instruct them:
 - Use your right hand to slap your right hip (gently). And the right hand will always have this movement.
 - Use the left hand to tap your chest. As quickly as possible, tap your chest with your left hand, and immediately slap the right hip.
 - Tell them, say “Flam—“fa-lam.”
 - Repeat, starting with the left tap on the chest (you can write on a whiteboard).
 - LR RL LR RL LR RL LR.
 - Work so that students do the flam in unison. Pick up speed if possible.
 - Watch a flam demonstration: <https://bit.ly/FlamDemo>.
 - Practice a rudiment—paradiddle.
 - While standing, instruct students:
 - Tell them, “We can say paradiddle as we go, par-a-did-dle, par-a-ddle.”
 - The rudiment is RLRR LLLL RLRR LLLL RLRR LLLL.
 - Work to be in unison and increase speed.
 - Watch a paradiddle: <https://bit.ly/SingleParadiddleDemo>.
 - Want a stretch? Combine the two rudiments to create the flam paradiddle.
 - Tell students to say “fa-lam-a-did-dle fa-lam-a-did-dle.”
 - LRLRR RLRL LRLRR RLRL.
 - Watch a flam paradiddle: <https://bit.ly/FlamParadiddleDemo>.
 - Play the snare drum.
 - Share with students: drums have two heads: the top (batter head) and the bottom (snare head).

- During the Civil War, these heads were usually made of calfskin or sheepskin. Because these materials were affected by humidity, they could get slack. Hence, precision was crucial to making the beat patterns.
- Have students take turns working with the snare drum to make rudiments.

Discussion Questions

- Was it easy being a drummer during the Civil War? Why or why not?
- How were drumming and music important to the war effort?
- What did you like about today's activity? How is working together important?



Civil War Stories from North Carolina

Distance Learning

Objectives

- Students will learn to analyze and identify objects.
- Students will recognize that artifacts inform history.

Time

One 60-minute session

Materials

- Six reproduction hats or hat images
- Copies of “Civil War Stories from North Carolina” biography pages, primary source pages, information pages, and group worksheets
- *Civil War Stories from North Carolina* link:
<https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/civil-war-stories-north-carolina-form-grades-4-8>
 - In this program, based on primary sources, explore the background and writings of individual North Carolinians who lived during the Civil War to help students understand the choices they faced and decisions made in response to the changes brought about by the war. Grades 4–8.
- Pencils

Procedure

- Go to: <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/civil-war-stories-north-carolina-form-grades-4-8>.
- Before you begin the video:
 - Review the background information with students.
 - Divide the class into five groups.
- Start the video.
 - To avoid distractions, do not distribute replica hats or hat images until instructed to do so in the video.
 - Once prompted, give each group the corresponding packet for the hat you assign:
 - 1 biography page (Page A)
 - 1 primary source page (Page B)
 - 1 information page (Page C)
 - 1 group worksheet

- During the video:
 - Be prepared to pause when the museum instructor prompts you to do so.
 - Monitor group activity and assist students who are having difficulty.
 - Keep students on topic and help them follow directions.

Discussion Ideas

- What objects represent your life today?
- What might a historian in the year 2150 think about it?
- Do you think the historian will recognize the object?

Distance-Learning Program Materials

Educator Information

Thanks for watching one of our distance-learning videos! With this program, students work together to make connections between the past and the present with hands-on activities. Everything you need is in this package and in the video. The program usually takes an hour to complete.

Before you begin the video, here's what you need to do:

1. Divide the class into five groups.
2. Print the materials needed as listed below. Do NOT distribute to students until requested to do so.

Materials Needed	Copies Needed
Hats or Hat Images	There are six hats or hat images. One copy of each image needed.
Group 1 Materials	1 worksheet, 1 information page, 1 primary source page, 1 biography page
Group 2 Materials	1 worksheet, 1 information page, 1 primary source page, 1 biography page
Group 3 Materials	1 worksheet, 1 information page, 1 primary source page, 1 biography page
Group 4 Materials	1 worksheet, 1 information page, 1 primary source page, 1 biography page
Group 5 Materials	1 worksheet, 1 information page, 1 primary source page, 1 biography page

3. Randomly pass out the hats or hat images when prompted by the museum instructor. There are five groups and six hats, so one group will receive two hats. It does not matter which group receives two hats or images.
4. Ready? Start the video, but ***be prepared to pause it*** when the museum instructor prompts you to do so. Please do not pass out materials until prompted to do so during the video.

During the video:

1. Monitor group activity and assist students who are having difficulty.
2. Keep students on topic and help them follow directions.

After the video:

1. Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed evaluation form or use the online evaluation at ncmuseumofhistory.org/learn.
2. Check the museum website for additional resources.

Hat 1



Hat 2



Hat 3



Hat 4



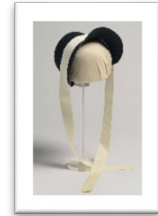
Hat 5



Hat 6



Group 1, Page A: Catherine Edmondston Biography



Catherine Devereux was born in 1823 in Halifax County. After marrying Patrick Edmondston, she lived at Looking Glass Plantation. The Edmondstons enslaved 88 people.

The Edmondstons were **secessionists**; they believed that the southern states should leave the Union and join the Confederate States of America.

Catherine Edmondston frequently wrote in her diary about her life.

During the war, many people in the state were hungry and without enough clothing. The Edmondstons did not experience these shortages.

The enslaved people at the plantation grew or made much of the food and clothing needed by the Edmondstons.

Catherine Edmondston remained loyal to the Confederacy, even after it was defeated. The Edmondstons lost much of their wealth when enslaved people were freed. She died at age 51 in Raleigh.



Group 1, Page B: Catherine Edmondston Primary Source

Edmondston Diary Entries

February 18, 1861

Today was inaugurated at Montgomery [Alabama] Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America. . . . O that North Carolina would join.

January 31, 1862

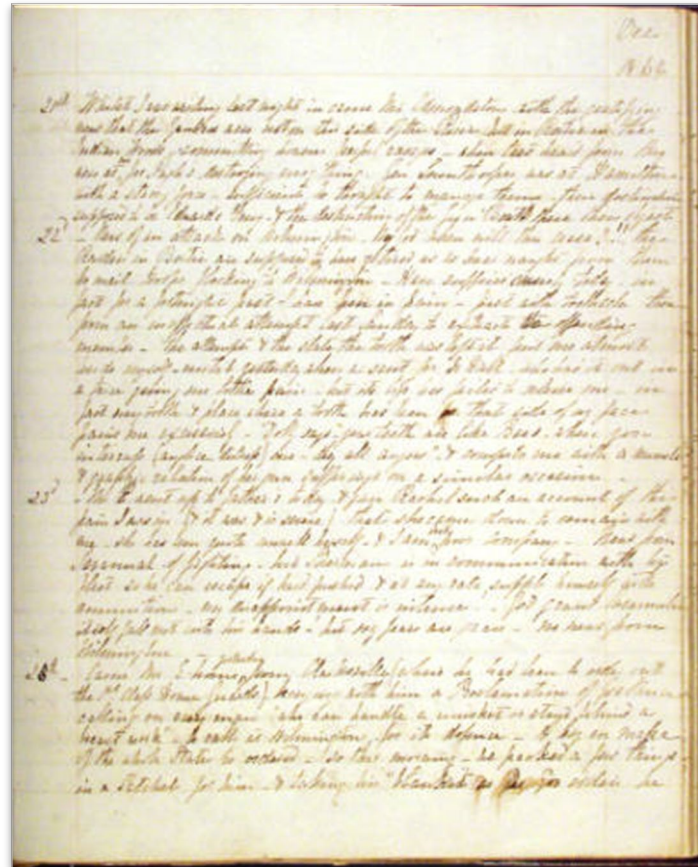
Dined with Sister Frances. All well & as usual, she was busy making haversacks and flags for the regiments to take the field in the spring.

March 15, 1865

There will be many days this summer when we cannot taste meat, but what of that if our army is fed.

April 11, 1865

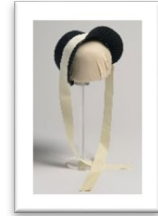
Yesterday came the . . . officers with orders from General Johnston to take all the best of our horses, to leave us only the worthless & the inferior. . . . We have given & freely given all we could spare.





Group 1, Page C: Catherine Edmondston
Video Introduction

- In February 1861, most North Carolinians did not want to secede from, or leave, the Union.
- Still, three months later, on May 20, 1861, North Carolina joined the Confederate States of America.
- After secession, many North Carolina men joined the Confederate army, and family members at home learned to do without them.



Group 1: Catherine Edmondston Worksheet

Team Members: _____

Part 1

Catherine Edmondston was born in _____ in _____ County. She and her
(Information page A) (Information page A)

husband enslaved _____ people and lived on _____ Plantation. The Edmondstons
(Information page A) (Information page A)

were _____, which means they believed that North Carolina should join the
(Information page A)

Confederate States of America. During the Civil War, Catherine Edmondston wrote in

her _____ frequently. She did not suffer many hardships during the war because
(Information page A)

of the _____ and _____ produced by the enslaved people. In 1862,
(Information page A) (Information page A)

Edmondston recorded in her diary that her sister Frances was busy making

_____ and _____ for the regiments. Just before the war ended,
(Primary Source page B) (Primary Source page B)

in April 1865, Edmondston wrote, "We have given and freely given _____

_____."

(Primary Source page B)

Part 2

Discuss with your group these questions and make some notes for discussion.

After the Confederacy lost the war, did Catherine Edmondston's feelings about the Confederacy change?

Do you think her life changed after the war? If so, in what ways?

Group 2, Page A: Francis and Martha Poteet
Information



Francis and Martha Poteet were born in Burke County in the mid-1820s. Francis was a carpenter, miller, and farmer. Martha tended the home and raised their 13 children.

In 1863 Francis was drafted into the Confederate army. He faced many hardships, including hunger, tiredness, and the dangers of battle.

Martha also had hard times running the farm and home by herself. The family was often hungry and sick.

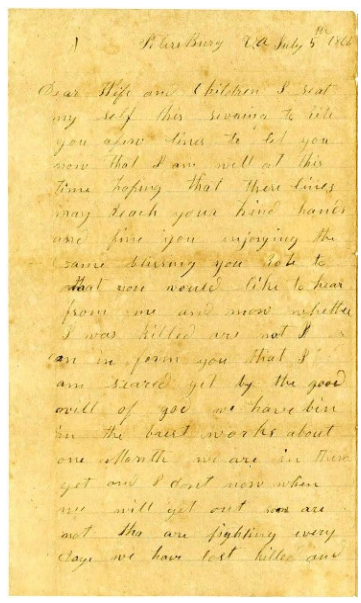
In 1863 Francis left his army unit without permission to visit their dying son, Alvis. When Francis returned to the army, he was sent to prison for desertion. Two of their children died during the war years.

After the war, the family moved. Francis worked in a grinding mill while Martha tended store. Martha and Francis died a day apart in 1902. They were almost 80 years old.

Group 2, Page B: Francis and Martha Poteet Primary Source



Review the images of the Poteet letters and then read the transcripts of selected excerpts. Original spellings have been retained, but punctuation and paragraph breaks have been added.

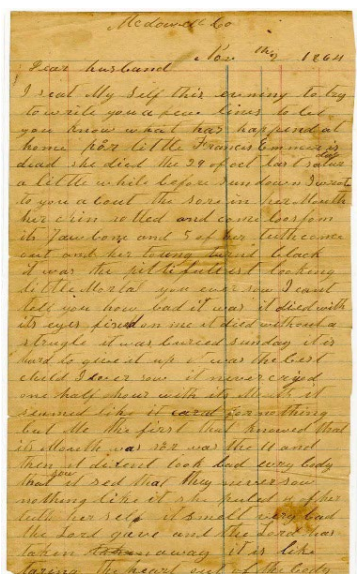


Francis Poteet to Martha Poteet, July 5, 1864

Dear Wife and Children

I seat myself this evning to rite you a few lines to let you now that I am well at this time hoping . . . you enjoyng the same blessing. you rote to me to come home and save the wheat. I cant come. I would like to come home and see you all once more in this life and see my sweete littel baby . . .

I haint slep one good night sleepe in two month. I have to work and stand gard every night. I am very nigh broken down. . . fare well dear wife. god bless you is my prayer.



Martha Poteet to Francis Poteet, November 2, 1864

Dear husband

I seat myself this evning to try to write you a few lines to let you know what has happend at home. Poor little Francis Emmer is dead. She died the 29 of oct last saturday a little while before sundown.

I cant tell you how bad it was . . . she was buried Sunday. I hav ben sick about 5 weeks . . . I am fixing to send you somthing to eat and a pare of socks . . . All the children sends you howdy. They say that we are badly whipped. God bless and save you.

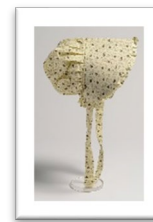
Group 2, Page C: Francis and Martha
Poteet
Video Introduction



1 1

- The war years brought great changes to most people in North Carolina.
- Soldiers traveled far from home.
- People left behind tried to keep farms and families going.
- Supplies were hard to come by, and some people went hungry.

Group 2: Francis and Martha Poteet Worksheet



Team Members: _____

Part 1

The Poteets were born in the mid-_____ in _____ County. Francis worked as a
(Information page A) (Information page A)

_____, _____, and _____. Martha looked after their home
(Information page A) (Information page A)

and raised their _____ children. Francis was a soldier in the _____ army.
(Information page A) (Information page A)

Some of the hardships he faced included _____, _____, and
(Information page A) (Information page A)

dangers of battle. Martha also had hard times. _____ of their children died during the
(Information page A)

war years. Martha and the children were often hungry and _____. Francis wrote to
(Information page A)

Martha, "I haint slep _____." In a letter,
(Primary Source page B)

Martha tells Francis she is sending him _____ and _____.
(Primary Source page B) (Primary Source page B)

She comments that "we" [the Confederacy] are "_____
(Primary Source page B)

Part 2

Discuss with your group these questions and make some notes for discussion.

What worried Francis and Martha Poteet during the Civil War?

Do you think their lives changed after the war? If so, in what ways?



Group 3, Page A: Tilghman Vestal Information

Tilghman Vestal was born in Yadkin County in 1844. Vestal was a member of the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers. Quakers do not believe in violence or slavery.

Vestal was drafted into the Confederate army when he was 18. He refused to serve as a soldier or to pay the tax that would have kept him from being a soldier.

While in the army, he was stuck with bayonets (the blades on the end of rifles) for refusing to do any service, even sweeping.

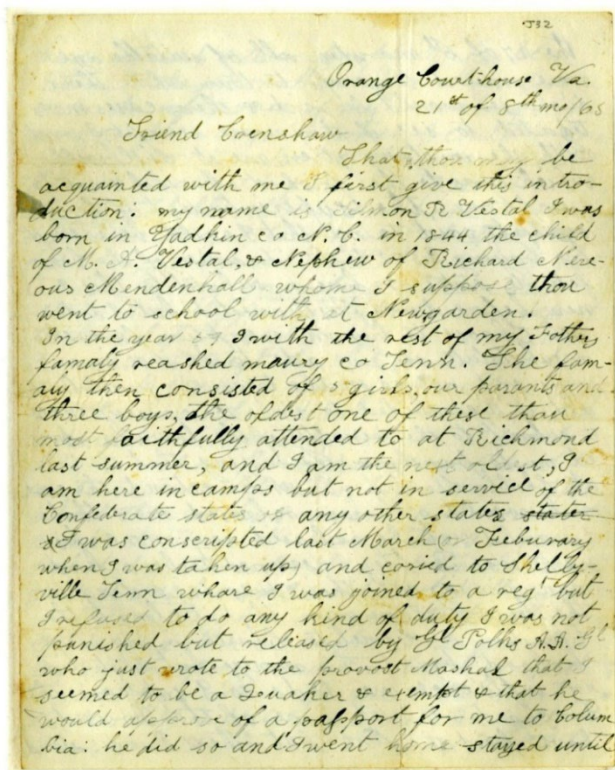
Vestal was sent to military prison. Eventually, a group of important Quakers had him freed. Vestal went to school at New Garden (present-day Greensboro). In 1865 Vestal moved to Philadelphia, where he studied and started work as a farmhand.



Group 3, Page B: Tilghman Vestal Primary Source



Review the image of the Vestal letter and then read the transcripts of selected excerpts. Original spellings have been retained, but punctuation and paragraph breaks have been added. Vestal's letter is addressed to John Crenshaw, an important North Carolina Quaker who assisted many "conscientious objectors," men who refused to serve as soldiers because of their beliefs.



Orange Court-house Va. 21st of 8th mo /63

Friend Crenshaw

My name is Tilmon R. Vestal. I was born in Yadkin Co N.C. in 1844.

I was conscripted [drafted] last March . . . but I refused to do any kind of duty . . . The[y] said I could be exempt by paying \$500 to the Treasurer of the Confederate States. I did not choose to . . .

Eventually I was detailed to clean up camps . . . I refused to do it. [I] told the Colonel that I could not do anything for the benefit of the army. He jumped up said I will make you went off and brought up his police with guns & bayonets one of them set a shovel by me & said take it and go to work.

I did not . . . I looked him full in the face & said do you think I would endanger my soul to benefit my body? At this they began to pierce me with their bayonets.

I received 16 pierces one of which was an inch deep . . . [I] still refused saying nothing could make me go to war.

affectually

Tilmon R. Vestal

Group 3, Page C: Tilghman Vestal
Video Introduction



15

- North Carolina governor Zebulon Vance worked to supply the troops with uniforms, food, and arms.
- Some North Carolina men, including freedom seekers and free men of color, joined the Union army.
- Many Cherokee joined forces with the Confederacy.



Group 3: Tilghman Vestal Worksheet

Team Members: _____

Part 1

Tilghman Vestal was born in _____ in _____ County. Vestal was raised in
(Information page A) (Information page A)

the _____ faith. Quakers do not believe in fighting in wars or in slavery.
(Information page A)

Vestal was drafted into the _____ army. He refused to serve in any way
(Information page A)

and was sent to _____. His family encouraged him to pay the _____
(Information page A) (Information page A)

that would have excused him from service, but Vestal refused. Vestal wrote that he had
refused to “clean up camps” and that he could not do “anything for the _____
(Primary Source page B)

of the army.” He wrote that the soldiers had used _____ to pierce him _____
(Primary Source page B) (Primary Source page B)

times when he refused to work.

Part 2

Discuss with your group these questions and make some notes for discussion.

Why do you think Tilghman Vestal refused to pay the tax that would have kept him out of the Confederate army?

Do you think his life changed after the war? If so, in what ways?



Isaac Erwin Avery was born in Burke County in 1828. Avery's family owned a lot of land in western North Carolina, where they enslaved more than 100 persons. The family was involved in farming, business, and government.

Avery enlisted in the Confederate army and was quickly promoted to colonel.

In July 1863 Colonel Avery led an attack on Cemetery Hill at the Battle of Gettysburg.

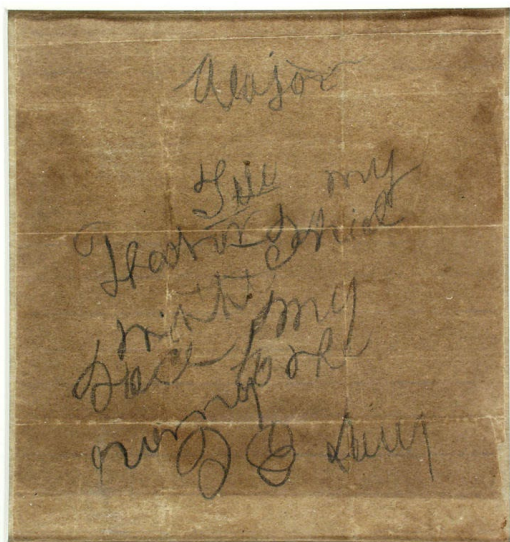
Avery led his men riding a large, black warhorse. He was the only soldier on horseback in the attack. Avery was shot at the base of the neck and fell from his horse. Unable to speak, he took a pencil and a scrap of paper from his coat and wrote a note to his father.

The bloodstained note was found near his hand. Avery died soon after in a field hospital. His soldiers made it to the top of Cemetery Hill, but without help, they were forced to retreat.

Group 4, Page B: I. E. Avery Primary Source



Review the image of the Avery note and then read the transcript.

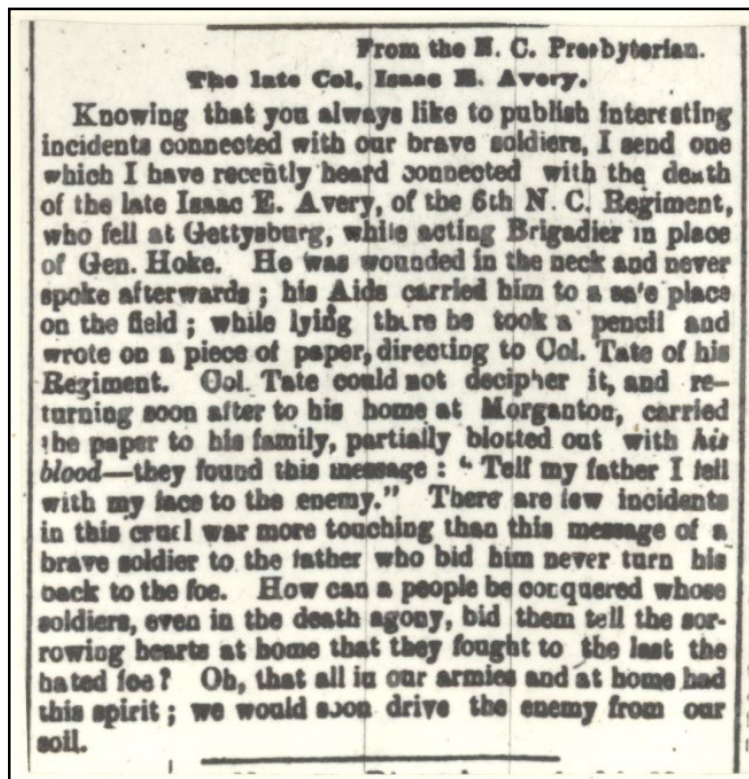


Transcript:

Major

Tell my Father I died with my face to the enemy

I E Avery



This image of an 1864 newspaper article about Avery encouraged devotion to the Confederate cause.

Group 4, Page C: I. E. Avery
Video Introduction



- In 1863 the Confederacy lost a major battle at Gettysburg.
- There was great suffering on the home front.
- Getting supplies became very difficult for the Confederacy.
- Some people wondered if it was time for peace.



Group 4: I. E. Avery Worksheet

Team Members: _____

Part 1

Isaac Erwin Avery was born in _____ in _____ County. His family
(Information page A) (Information page A)

owned a lot of land in western North Carolina and was involved in _____,
(Information page A)

_____, and _____. Avery became a colonel in the
(Information page A) (Information page A)

_____ army. In July 1863, Avery led an attack on _____ at
(Information page A) (Information page A)

the Battle of _____. Avery alone rode a large warhorse. As he led his men
(Information page A)

up the hill, he was shot in the neck and fell to the ground. Unable to speak, he took from

his coat a _____ and _____. Avery wrote a note:
(Information page A) (Information page A)

“ _____ ”
(Primary Source page B)

The last line of an 1864 newspaper article stated, “Oh, that all in our armies and at

home had this spirit; _____.”
(Primary Source page B)

Part 2

Discuss with your group these questions and make some notes for discussion.

Why do you think Isaac Erwin Avery chose to ride a horse up Cemetery Hill?

Do you think life changed for Avery's family after the war? If so, in what ways?

Group 5, Page A: Richard Etheridge Information



Richard Etheridge was born enslaved on Roanoke Island in Dare County in 1842. Etheridge was taught to read and write by his enslaver's family.

When Union forces captured Roanoke Island, Etheridge left his enslaver and joined the Union army.

Etheridge became a sergeant and helped recruit other soldiers. By the end of the war, over 5,000 Black North Carolinians had joined the Union army.

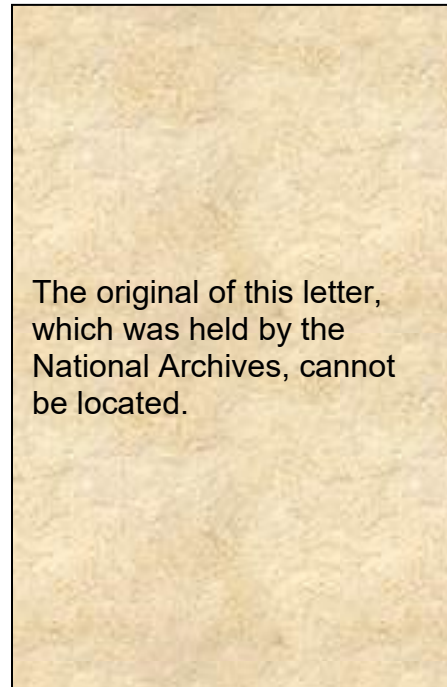
In 1866 Etheridge returned to Roanoke Island to help veterans from his regiment. Years later, Etheridge became the new commander, or keeper, of the Pea Island Lifesaving

Station. Etheridge's crew saved many lives when shipwrecks occurred. In 1996 the US Coast Guard awarded the Gold Life-Saving Medal posthumously (after death) to Etheridge and his crew.

Group 5, Page B: Richard Etheridge Primary Source



Read the transcript of a letter from Richard Etheridge and William Benson to General O. O. Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau. Original spellings have been retained, but punctuation and paragraph breaks have been added.



The original of this letter, which was held by the National Archives, cannot be located.

[City Point?, Va. May or June 1865]

Genl

We have served in the US Army faithfully and don our duty to our Country . . . but our family's are suffering.

We were promised that our family's should receive rations from government . . . Our ration's are stolen from the ration house by Mr Steeter the Assistant Superintendent . . . and sold . . .

Mr Steeter is a thorough Copper head . . . [He] takes no care of the colored people and has no Simpathy with the colored people . . .

Our familys have no protection. The white soldiers break into our houses, act as they please, steal our chickens, rob our gardens and if any one defends their-Selves against them they are taken to the guard house for it.

Gen'l we the soldiers of the 36 U.S. Colored Troops humbly petition you to favour us by removeing Mr Streeter at Roanoke Island.

Signed in behalf of humanity
Richard Etheridge and Wm Benson

Group 5, Page C: Richard Etheridge
Video Introduction



- In March 1865, Union general William T. Sherman invaded North Carolina.
- Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston's army was defeated on March 21, 1865, at Bentonville in North Carolina.
- April brought the Confederate surrender and an end to the war.



Group 5: Richard Etheridge Worksheet

Team Members: _____

Part 1

Richard Etheridge was born enslaved on _____ Island in _____ County in
(Information page A) (Information page A)

1842. The family of Etheridge's enslaver taught him to _____ and _____.
(Information page A) (Information page A)

Etheridge fled his enslaver to join the 36th US Colored Troops of the _____ army
(Information page A)

during the Civil War. Over _____ Black North Carolinians joined the Union army
(Information page A)

during the war. After the war, Etheridge wrote to a government office to request the

promised _____ for Union veterans' "family's." Etheridge complained about Mr.
(Primary Source page B)

Streeter, who was supposed to help the freed African Americans. Etheridge wrote

that Mr. Streeter was a thief. He called him a thorough " _____."
(Primary Source page B)

Etheridge got a job working for a _____ station on Roanoke Island
(Information page A)

and became the keeper, or _____, of the Pea Island station in 1879.
(Information page A)

Part 2

Discuss with your group these questions and make some notes for discussion.

Why do you think the government helped freed African Americans after the Civil War?

Do you think life changed for Richard Etheridge after the war? If so, in what ways?

Group 1: Catherine Edmondston Worksheet Answer Key



Part 1

Catherine Edmondston was born in 1823 in Halifax County. She and her husband enslaved 88 people and lived on Looking Glass plantation. The Edmondstons were secessionists, which means they believed that North Carolina should join the Confederate States of America. During the Civil War, Catherine Edmondston wrote in her diary frequently. She did not suffer many hardships during the war because of the food and clothing produced by the enslaved people. In 1862 Edmondston recorded in her diary that her sister Frances was busy making flags and haversacks for the regiments. Just before the war ended, in April 1865, Edmondston wrote, "We have given and freely given all we could spare."

Part 2

After the Confederacy lost the war, did Catherine Edmondston's feelings about the Confederacy change?

- She was "unreconstructed," meaning she remained loyal to the ideas of the Confederacy.
- She wrote a book using a false name extolling the virtues of the Confederacy after the war.

Do you think her life changed after the war? If so, in what ways?

- Yes! She and her husband lost property of their enslaved people and lost other sources of wealth.
- Her husband died shortly after the war. Catherine moved to Raleigh.

Group 2: Francis and Martha Poteet Worksheet Answer Key



Part 1

The Poteets were born in the mid-1820s in Burke County. Francis worked as a carpenter, miller, and farmer. Martha looked after their home and raised their 13 children. Francis was a soldier in the Confederate army. Some of the hardships he faced included lack of food, tiredness, and dangers of battle. Martha also had hard times. Two of their children died during the war years. Martha and the children were often hungry and sick. Francis wrote to Martha, "I haint slep one good night sleep in two months." In a letter, Martha tells Francis she is sending him socks and food. She comments that "we" [the Confederacy] are "badly whipped."

Part 2

What worried Francis and Martha Poteet during the Civil War?

- Survival! Not so concerned about the war, but of feeding the family, and daily struggles.
- They wanted to be together again.

Do you think their lives changed after the war? If so, in what ways?

- Yes! They were back together and could fare better. Probably not enslavers, so loss of property was minimal.
- Lived long lives and ran a mill and store. Died one day apart from each other.

Group 3: Tilghman Vestal Worksheet Answer Key

Part 1

Tilghman Vestal was born in 1844 in Yadkin County. Vestal was raised in the Religious Society of Friends/Quaker faith. Quakers do not believe in fighting in wars or in slavery. Vestal was drafted into the Confederate army. He refused to serve in any way and was sent to military prison. His family encouraged him to pay the tax that would have excused him from service, but Vestal refused. Vestal wrote that he had refused to “clean up camps” and that he could not do “anything for the benefit of the army.” He wrote that the soldiers had used bayonets to pierce him 16 times when he refused to work.



Part 2

Why do you think Tilghman Vestal refused to pay the tax that would have kept him out of the Confederate army?

- He recognized that taxes paid to free him would go to the Confederate government, and he would not support that government, which was waging war and supporting slavery.

Do you think his life changed after the war? If so, in what ways?

- Yes! No longer had to worry about being drafted or being in prison. Free to move, study, and work.

Group 4: I. E. Avery

Worksheet Answer Key



Part 1

Isaac Erwin Avery was born in 1828 in Burke County. His family owned a lot of land in western North Carolina and was involved in farming, business, and government. Avery became a colonel in the Confederate army. In July 1863, Avery led an attack on Cemetery Hill at the Battle of Gettysburg. Avery alone rode a large warhorse. As he led his men up the hill, he was shot in the neck and fell to the ground. Unable to speak, he took from his coat a pencil and a scrap of paper. Avery wrote a note: "Major, tell my father I died with my face to the enemy." The last line of an 1864 newspaper article stated, "Oh, that all in our armies and at home had this spirit; we would soon drive the enemy from our soil."

Part 2

Why do you think Isaac Erwin Avery chose to ride a horse up Cemetery Hill?

- He was a leader of men who knew they were facing almost certain death and sought to set an example of bravery.

Do you think life changed for Avery's family after the war? If so, in what ways?

- Yes! They missed him very much and his family lost wealth and property, including their enslaved people.

Group 5: Richard Etheridge

Worksheet Answer Key



Part 1

Richard Etheridge was born enslaved on Roanoke Island in Dare County in 1842. The family of Etheridge's enslaver taught him to read and write. Etheridge fled his enslaver to join the 36th US Colored Troops of the Union/United States army during the Civil War. Over 5,000 Black North Carolinians joined the Union army during the war. After the war, Etheridge wrote to a government office to request the promised rations (food) for Union veterans' "family's." Etheridge complained about Mr. Streeter, who was supposed to help the freed African Americans. Etheridge wrote that Mr. Streeter was a thief. He called him a thorough "copper head." Etheridge got a job working for a lifesaving station on Roanoke Island and became the keeper, or commander, of the Pea Island station in 1879.

Part 2

Why do you think the government helped freed African Americans after the Civil War?

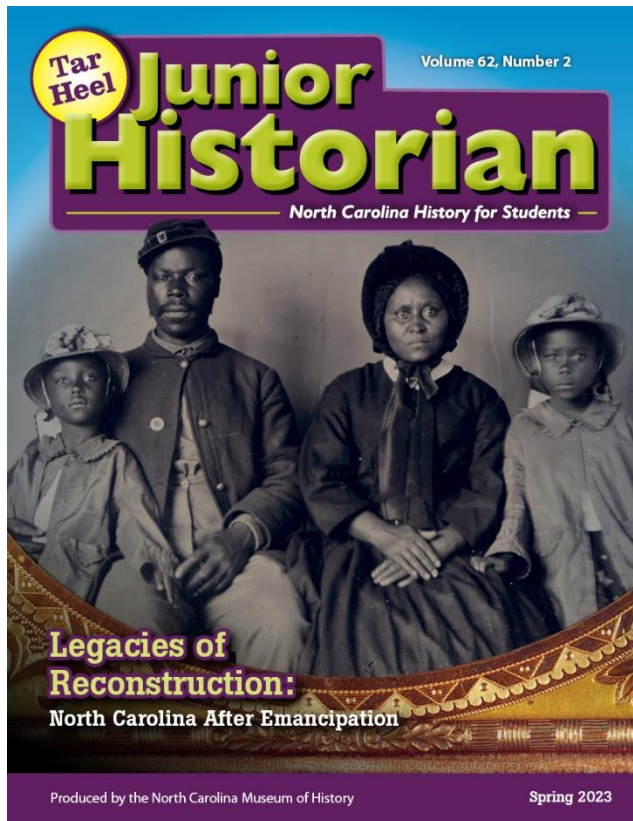
- The US government recognized a need and an obligation to help newly freed peoples.
- During the war, many enslaved people escaped, seeking Union troops, looking for work and for help reconnecting with lost loved ones.

Do you think life changed for Richard Etheridge after the war? If so, in what ways?

- Freed! He no longer had to worry about losing loved ones to enslavement and could seek family members.
- He found a position of responsibility and earned a living, running one of the most successful lifesaving stations in the country.

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History of the CSS Neuse, the Confederate Navy and other useful information

Ironclads: The Background

The American Civil War is regarded by many historians as the first modern war. This is because of the many new technologies and tactics introduced. One of the developments of the war was the first use in combat of steam powered armored ships.

Steam powered ships were developed in the early 1800's. Steam propulsion became more practical for warships, though, with the development of the screw propeller in the 1840's. The early steam engines were still very inefficient, which required most steamships to carry auxiliary sails. When the Civil War broke out the transition from sail to steam was still underway.

The ironclad warship was not a new idea when war broke out in America in 1861. The U. S. Congress had appropriated money for construction of an ironclad warship in 1842, though the ship was never completed. During the Crimean War (1853-1856) France and Britain successfully used armored floating batteries in battle. Following this experience France launched the world's first true armored warship, *LaGlorie*, in 1858. Two years later Britain followed with a larger, more advanced ironclad named *Warrior*. Thereafter both navies put follow-up ironclads under construction. This was the beginning of a naval arms race and rapid evolution in naval technology that would eventually lead to the modern warship.

When war broke out in April 1861 the U. S. Navy had about ninety ships. Over half of these were obsolete sailing ships. Of the steamships, many were out of commission and in poor repair. Those ships that were in commission were mostly in foreign duty stations. This situation caused navy secretary Gideon Wells to institute a massive program of ship purchasing and construction. By war's end nearly 700 ships were in the Union Navy.

Manpower was also a problem for the U. S. Navy. In December 1860, the navy had 1,554 officers, of whom nearly one fourth would resign. Most of the remaining 1,181 officers and the 7,500 enlisted men were on ships stationed abroad. Vigorous recruiting during the war would swell naval manpower to 7,000 officers and 51,000 enlisted men. It is little known, but by war's end nearly one fourth of the enlisted men in the Union Navy were black.

For all the obstacles it faced, the Union Navy's difficulties could not compare with those facing the fledgling Confederate Navy. Every facet of the Confederate government had to be created "from scratch." From the first meeting of the seceding states on February 4, 1861, the newly formed Confederate States of America had just over two months to organize themselves before being thrown into war.

When the Congress created the Navy Department, they were primarily interested in creating a small navy to cooperate with the army. President Jefferson Davis had little understanding of naval power and ignored naval policy, though he was not against the navy per se. Stephen Mallory, a former U. S. Senator from Florida, was appointed Secretary of the Navy. Having been Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, he was well qualified to be the secretary. Unfortunately, he was unpopular with the press, public, and many of his officers.

The Confederate Navy was nearly destitute of equipment when it was organized. Only one U. S. ship in a Southern port fell into the Confederate hands. Additionally, four captured revenue cutters, three commandeered slavers, and two purchased steamers gave the navy a nucleus of ten ships mounting fifteen guns. When Virginia seceded in April 1861 the valuable Gosport Navy Yard in Norfolk fell into Confederate hands. Captured with this facility were important machine manufacturing tools and over one thousand artillery pieces. The ships, which had been moored in the harbor, were all burned during the Union evacuation. One of these burned ships, the USS *Merrimack*, a 3,200-ton screw propelled frigate launched in 1856, would later be raised and rebuilt as the ironclad CSS *Virginia*.

With inadequate facilities and financing to build large numbers of ships, Secretary Mallory decided to focus the navy's efforts on ironclads so that invulnerability could make up for the lack of numbers. After initial efforts to purchase ironclads from European navies failed Mallory sought ironclads built in the Confederacy. The first Confederate ironclads were the *Manassas* and the *Virginia*, both of which were conversions of existing ships. Later, most Confederate ironclads were built from the keel up. Early Confederate ironclads had many flaws though; among these were inadequate armor, insufficient firepower, and excessive draft.

There were many differences between the various Confederate ironclads, but some generalizations can be made. The most universal feature of Confederate ironclads was the armored casemate or shield protecting and housing the guns. Except for the early-war private conversion *Manassas*, all Confederate ironclads had a casemate. Typically, the sides of the casemate were composed of 18" to 24" of wood backing behind two or more layers of two-inch iron armor plate. The casemate sides were normally inclined at 35 to 45 degrees.

The arrangement of the armor was a compromise between what was needed for protection and what could be manufactured. At first, Confederate authorities had planned to use three layers of one-inch plate for armor. Extensive tests conducted at Jamestown Island, Virginia proved this

to be insufficient against most heavy artillery. They then decided upon four inches of armor. This had to be in two layers of two-inch plates. They thought that the individual plates should be as thick as possible, and there were no facilities in the South capable of rolling wrought-iron plates thicker than two inches.

Southern ironclads were also characterized by weak unreliable machinery. Many vessels built early in the conflict were powered by used boilers and engines from old tugs, ships, and locomotives because the South lacked the industrial capacity to manufacture good marine machinery. The poor machinery made many of the ships very slow, which condemned a few of them (Georgia and *North Carolina* are examples) to service as floating batteries because their engines could barely move the ships. Only near the end of the conflict could Confederate manufacturing produce good quality power plants for the ironclads being built.

Living conditions aboard the ships were dismal, a condition that held for Union ironclads as well. During the summer months they were very hot and in winter very cold. They were damp in all seasons. Most of them used only wind sails or cowlings to force air into the berth deck. Only one, the *Tennessee*, had mechanical fans for ventilation. Such conditions led inevitably to disease and moral problems. If possible, crews sought quarters ashore or on a nearby barge. The crew of the *Neuse* lived on the riverbank adjacent to the ship.

Designers of Confederate ironclads, principally John L. Porter and William A. Graves, sought to find the best combination of armor, armament, and draft-factors which were in some respects mutually exclusive. After building very large ironclads (four were more than 260 ft. long) early in the war, subsequent designs were much smaller and easier to construct. The capture of coastal regions and major ports such as Norfolk and New Orleans in early 1862 forced shipbuilding inland. At these inland sites such as Richmond, VA, Columbus GA, and Whitehall and Edwards Ferry, NC, the draft of the vessels being built was of prime consideration. Another factor was that at some of these locations' facilities were poor and skilled labor scarce.

North Carolina Ironclads

Ironclads were built in North Carolina for two purposes. First was the protection of Wilmington and the approaches to the Cape Fear River. This port was of vital importance because it was a haven for blockade running. For this reason, numerous forts, including Fort Fisher, were built near the mouth of the Cape Fear in addition to the ironclad vessels.

The second reason for the construction of ironclads was the recapture of the sounds. General Ambrose Burnside's campaign of early 1862 resulted in the capture of New Bern, Plymouth, Roanoke Island, and Fort Macon, which guarded Beaufort Harbor. The recapture of this region became a high priority for the state and Confederate governments. Because of the presence of Union gunboats, retaking those regions would require naval support. For that reason, also, the Confederate Navy built ironclads in the state.

The four ironclads completed in North Carolina were designed by John L. Porter, Chief Confederate Naval Constructor, and reflected the navy's decision to downsize its ships. Two, the *Raleigh* and the *North Carolina*, were built in Wilmington and were among the most poorly constructed Confederate ironclads. These ships were each 175 feet long, 45 feet at the beam and draft of 13 feet. Begun in early 1862, these vessels had inglorious careers. The *Raleigh* escorted two blockade runners to sea in May 1864, and traded shots with one of the blockading ships. While returning through New Inlet the ship ran aground on a falling tide and eventually broke her back. The *North Carolina's* fate was even worse. This vessel sank at her mooring from a rotten, worm-eaten bottom.

In the fall of 1862, the Confederate Navy issued contracts for the construction of three additional ironclads. These vessels were to be small, shallow draft vessels 158 feet long. They would be 34 feet wide and draw 8 feet of water. These ships were intended to wrest control of the state's coastal region away from the Union. To keep them as safe as possible from potential destruction in Union raids, they had to be built well inland.

The first was contracted to J. G. Martin and Gilbert Elliott on September 17, 1862 for construction in Tarboro on the Tar River. On October 10, 1862, the same shipbuilders were authorized to build another ship on the same terms at Edward's Ferry on the Roanoke River. Shortly afterward, Thomas S. Howard and Elijah W. Ellis received the contract to build the third ironclad, which would become the *Neuse*, at Whitehall on the Neuse River. The Tarboro ironclad was never completed. It was still on the stocks when it was destroyed during a Union raid in July 1863.

The Edward's Ferry ironclad went on to become the successful *Albemarle*. After having been fitted out in Halifax, N. C. the ship was commissioned and ordered downriver to participate in an attack on Plymouth on April 17, 1864. The ship was so new that there were still mechanics and carpenters working to fasten the last of the iron plates to the casemate as she steamed downriver.

The *Albemarle* finally neared Plymouth early on the morning of April 19, 1864. Lying in wait were the steamers *Miami* and *Southfield*, the two most powerful gunboats the Union Navy had in the area. The ships were linked together by large hawser ropes to entangle the ironclad between them. On arriving at Plymouth, Commander James A. Cooke aboard the *Albemarle* recognized the tactic and steered his ship close to the north bank of the river before swinging south toward the two ships. The ironclad reached the *Miami* first and glanced off the wooden ship's bow leaving only superficial damage and plowed directly into the *Southfield's* starboard bow. The impact tore a gaping hole through to the boiler room and the doomed ship began settling to the bottom.

The *Albemarle* nearly followed its victim as its bow stuck fast in the side of the sinking ship. The ironclad's straining engines were unable to reverse fast enough, and soon water began pouring in through the forward gunport. When the *Southfield* hit the bottom of the river the bow of the *Albemarle* finally slipped free. The *Albemarle*, while trapped by the sinking gunboat, was subjected to point-blank fire from the *Miami*. The four-inch iron of the casemate proved impervious, and one of the ricocheting shells landed back on the deck of the *Miami* exploding and killing Charles Flusser, the commanding officer.

After the *Miami* withdrew downriver the *Albemarle* provided valuable fire support by shelling enemy shore positions. General Henry Wessels surrendered the Union garrison at 10:00 AM on April 20, 1864, ending one of the Confederacy's most successful combined land and sea operations of the war. The presence of the *Albemarle* to scatter the Union fleet and shell shore positions was the decisive factor.

On the May 5th, the *Albemarle* and the small wooden steamers *Bombshell* and *Cotton Plant* steamed down the Roanoke River into Albemarle Sound on their way to New Bern. The *Neuse* originally had been scheduled to go to New Bern, but it ran aground, leading to the use of the *Albemarle* as its replacement. As these ships entered the sound seven Union gunboats mounting a total of sixty guns attacked them. The *Cotton Plant* escaped back up the river, but the *Bombshell* was late receiving orders to withdraw and was captured. The *Albemarle* remained in action for over three hours inflicting heavy damage. The ironclad, though, was unable to continue to New Bern because she too was badly damaged. The muzzle of the stern gun had been shot off, several plates had been knocked loose, her tiller ropes were parted, and her smokestack was riddled. Because of the damage to the stack, bacon, lard, butter, and even wood from the ship's furnishings was thrown into the boilers to keep up enough steam pressure to limp back to Plymouth.

The *Albemarle* did not leave the Roanoke again, but she did remain a constant threat to the Federal control of the sounds. Realizing that before Plymouth and the surrounding area could be retaken, the ironclad would have to be destroyed or captured, the Federals decided upon a plan to sink the vessel using a steam launch with a spar torpedo.

On October 27th Lt. William Cushing and an all volunteer crew took a small steam powered launch upriver to Plymouth. Under heavy rifle fire from the riverbank he approached the ironclad. The bow of the launch slid over a log boom set in the river to protect the ironclad, and Cushing lowered the torpedo below the *Albemarle's* waterline and exploded it. Though only Cushing and one of his crew escaped (the rest were killed or captured), the job had been done. The Confederate ironclad was sunk.

With the *Albemarle* destroyed, Confederates quickly abandoned the town. Upon retaking the town, Federal authorities immediately began exploring the possibility of re-floating the ship. This was successfully done on March 18, 1865. The following month it was towed to Norfolk, Va. where it remained for the next two and one-half years while officially listed as the USS *Albemarle*. The vessel was eventually stripped of its guns and armor and sold at public auction on October 15, 1867 to J. N. Leonard & Co. for \$3,200.

CSS *NEUSE*: HISTORY

[This information is a supplement to *CSS Neuse: A Question of Iron and Time*, by Leslie S. Bright et al., and “The Career of the Confederate Ironclad Neuse,” by William Still in the 1966 N. C. Historical Review.]

The contract for the construction of the *Neuse* was signed on October 17, 1862. According to the terms Howard and Ellis were to build the hull of an ironclad gunboat and deliver it ready for machinery by March 1863. The contractors were to armor the vessel with iron and bolts (or spikes) to be provided by the Navy Department. The contracted price was \$40,000 to be paid in several installments.

Less than two months into their work the builders suffered a major setback when Union General John G. Foster conducted a raid from New Bern inland to Goldsboro in December 1862. As the Union forces, advanced inland there was heavy fighting at Whitehall. The uncompleted hull was struck numerous times by artillery and small arms fire, and one Union soldier

unsuccessfully tried to swim the river and burn the ship. The vessel was still on the stocks when the contracted completion date passed.

The exact date was not recorded of the launch of the *Neuse*, so one can only speculate upon when it occurred. Letters from late 1863 relating to the ship's construction suggest that the vessel was launched in late summer of that year. Whenever it took place, the launching of the ship was premature. Flag Officer William Lynch in Wilmington, who was responsible for the completion of ironclads in the state, ordered the *Neuse* to be launched before her propellers had been put in. Ordinarily, a ship's shafts and propellers were installed before launching because, obviously, that work was much easier to do with the ship on dry land. Later a cofferdam was built around the ship downriver to install the shafts and propellers.

After being floated and polled (or towed) to Kinston she was moored at the current site of the King Street bridge for completion (This location was a deep port called the "cat hole"). Finishing the vessel was slow. The South was short of iron, and poor railroads delayed shipment of armor. At one point in late winter of 1863, three weeks passed without any armor arriving in Kinston. A serious labor dispute in early April 1864 caused a few of the workers to go on strike, delaying the work further. However, the vessel was operational by late April 1864.

She steamed out of Kinston on April 22, 1864 to take part in General Robert F. Hoke's attack on New Bern. Unfortunately, the river was unusually low, and she ran aground after only one-half mile. The river was falling fast, and soon the bow was well out of the water. Confederate forces in the area tried unsuccessfully to float the ship using camels (large pontoons). They also tried in vain to create an artificial river rise by building a dam across the river below the ship. The ship remained stuck fast until the river rose on May 19, 1864.

By the time the ship was freed most of the Confederate infantry in the area had been called to duty in Virginia. Thereafter, even when the river was high enough, there was never enough troop support available for an attack on New Bern. The *Neuse* remained idle at her mooring until March 1865. However, this does not mean that the *Neuse* did not influence the war. Just by being complete and sitting in Kinston ready to go if the opportunity presented itself was a twofold threat to the Union. It made them wary of venturing inland along the Neuse River again on another raid. It also made them fearful of removing too many troops from New Bern and not being able to defend against the *Neuse*.

In early March 1865 General William Sherman entered the state from the south and advanced towards Goldsboro. General Jacob D. Cox was also advancing to Goldsboro from New Bern. Confederate resistance to Cox's advance, under command of General Braxton Bragg, was massed at Wyse Fork, east of Kinston. After heavy fighting on March 8th-10th, Bragg retreated towards Goldsboro, evacuating Kinston on March 11th. Orders were given to Commander Joseph Price to use the *Neuse* as rearguard, to cover the retreat of the army. On the 11th of March, as Federal cavalry reconnoitered the town, Commander Joseph Price ordered the crew to fire upon the Federals to keep them out of town. Later in the day the ship was scuttled, by setting it on fire and cutting it adrift. As it burned an explosion in the port bow sank the ironclad. Three days later the Union army occupied Kinston.

The modern recovery of the ship is covered very well in *CSS Neuse: A Question of Iron and Time*. That was not the first salvaging of the vessel though. The first salvaging occurred just days after the ship sank when soldiers from the 15th Connecticut infantry recovered some Colt side arms from the wreck. After the war ended the *CSS Neuse* was auctioned off by the United States Government to Satterlee, Lyon and Company from New York in October 1865. The machinery and armor plating were auctioned off local to the wreckage. The cannons were recovered and taken over by the United States Government, we have yet to track down just what has happened to them.

We do know that the boiler and engines from the ship were used to power a local sawmill. According to Federal Census records the mill in which the machinery was used was operating by 1870. Apparently, the mill changed hands twice, first passing from Joseph White to Jacob Parrott by 1879. The mill was operated later by Milton O'Berry before being torn down in the 1930's. No information has been found suggesting whether the machinery remained in the mill until it was torn down, or if it did, what became of it after the closing of the mill. The hull of the vessel remained in the river until its recovery in the early 1960's.

CSS *Neuse*: Design and Construction

The conditions in which the *Neuse* was built dominated the design of the ship. It was built in Whitehall (present day Seven Springs), twenty miles up the river from Kinston. Being built for operation in coastal waters necessitated a shallow draft. The ship's eight-foot draft is some four feet less than most other ironclads. Another prime consideration in the design of the ship was the

lack of shipyards that far inland. Also, there was not a ready supply of skilled labor nearby. Therefore, the ship had to be designed so that it could be easily built.

Though the *Neuse* and *Albemarle* were built in separate locations by different contractors, both were conceived by the same designer—John L. Porter, the Confederacy's chief shipbuilding architect. The vessels were nearly identical. From the builder of the *Albemarle*, Gilbert Elliott, insight can be gained as to how the shallow-draft steamers were built:

The keel was laid, and construction was commenced by bolting down, across the center, a piece of frame timber, which was of yellow pine, eight by ten inches. Another frame of the same size was then dovetailed into this, extending outwardly at an angle of 45 degrees, forming the side, and at the outer end of this frame for the shield was also dovetailed, the angle being about 35 degrees. And then the top deck was added, and so on around to the other end of the bottom beam. Other beams were then bolted down to the keel and to the first one fastened, and so on, working fore and aft, the main deck beams being interposed from stem to stern. The shield was 60 feet in length and octagonal in form. When this part of the work was completed she was a solid boat, built of pine frames and if calked would have floated in that condition, but she was afterwards covered with 4-inch planking, laid on longitudinally, as ships are usually planked, and this was properly calked and pitched, cotton being used instead of oakum, the latter being very scarce and the former the only article to be had in abundance.

The hull of the *Neuse* resembled a barge in some respects, with its flat bottom and straight sides. The flat bottom and straight side frames are easily noticed while standing deck display at the stern of the ship.

Also, visible from the deck display is the keelson running down the center of the hull. It is a series of 12" x 14" timbers laid end to end and joined by scarf joints. Extending down the edges of the bottom of the hull are three timbers called chine strakes. These strakes reinforced the joint between the bottom and the side frames. The strakes are also some of the few timbers in the ship which required bending.

From the ground beside the ship one notices the four-inch planking covering the outside of the hull. The planks were fastened onto the frames using iron spikes and wooden pegs known as trunnels. The seams between these planks were caulked with tarred cotton. This was only a slight

variation from oakum (tarred hemp) which was the traditional caulking material for wooden boats and ships. The tarred cotton fiber had to be pounded into all the seams between the planks with a mallet and caulking iron (a large chisel) before the ship was launched. Seams on all the exposed deck surfaces had to be payed (covered with hot pitch) after being caulked.

At the top of the surviving hull on the starboard side there is some remaining freeboard (the space between the waterline and main deck). The sharp 90-degree angle near the top of the hull is approximately where the waterline was. The freeboard left near the starboard bow measures thirty inches high and still has numerous large spikes that originally held on armor plates.

Near the bow of the ship one can see the remains of the bowstem and deadwood behind it. The stem is a naturally curved timber that may have been cut from a natural knee in a tree or from a tree stump. Behind the stem are three very large deadwood timbers that reinforce the bowstem. The top piece of deadwood shows evidence that there may originally have been another piece above it. The lower two pieces of deadwood are braced directly against the keelson and the frames on the bottom of the hull to provide great strength at the bow. About one foot behind the forward edge of the deadwood timbers is a notch called a rabbet where the sides of the hull joined into the deadwood at the bow.

As with most Confederate ironclads, the *Neuse* was built so it could be used as a ram. The ram on a vessel with the *Neuse*'s hull design was simply an armored extension of the bowstem. It was not a "beak" attached to the bow of the ship. Nothing remains of the actual ram at the bow of the ship.

The wood used in the ship was cut near the building site. Most of the timber is yellow pine. All the frames are pine, as are most of the planks. The bottom of the hull and the lower 67 inches on each side are covered with 4" x 15" pine planks. Above this point on each side 4-inch oak planks were used. The deadwood timbers at the bow are oak, as is the bowstem. The stem is probably either live oak or white oak. Interestingly, the keelson timbers are gum, a very strong wood, but not wood normally used in ship construction.

The surviving hull of the *Neuse* is 141' long, so there is a little missing from each end of the ship. The hull is 20' wide at the bottom and at the top is approximately 38' wide. The two sides of the ship are lying flatter than they would have originally, resulting in the current width.

CSS *Neuse*: Armor

The armor for the *Neuse* was in the form of 2” x 7” strips of wrought iron. This was the typical armor for Confederate ironclads. The casemate was covered with two layers of armor. The inner layer ran horizontally and the outer layer vertically. The backing for the armor was 21 inches of wood in three layers. The inner layer was one-foot thick vertical pine frames outside of which were 5-inch horizontal pine planks. The outer layer of wood was vertical 4-inch oak planking. The freeboard of the ship also was armored as evidenced by the many large spikes protruding from the surviving freeboard.

Due to the Confederacy’s lack of resources many of their ironclads did not have armor on the decking or under the water line. There is some documentation that they did go back and add additional courses of plate on some vessels. Documentary evidence and a portion of decking which remained at the outset of recovery indicate that the deck of the CSS *Neuse* was never armored. Additionally, the hull shows no evidence of having armor below the knuckle. The lack of deck armor or hull armor below the knuckle was a potential weakness in battle.

The armor for the *Neuse* was rolled in Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, VA and Scofield & Markham Rolling Mill in Atlanta, GA. These facilities were the closest ones that could roll the two-inch plates and were responsible for producing most of the armor for the Confederate ironclads. The only other ironworks capable of rolling iron of the size need for ironclads was in Selma, AL.

An interesting fact about the armor used on the *Neuse* and *Albemarle* is that most of it was old railroad iron. Rails were stripped from lines that had little military value and shipped to the mills where they were rolled into flat plates. This practice was common in the Confederacy because Southern mines could not produce enough ore. Where it was impossible to get rolled plates standard railroad T-rails were used. The *Louisiana*, *Arkansas*, *Missouri*, and *Georgia* were armored in this fashion, though the T-rail was recognized to be inferior to rolled plates as armor.

CSS *Neuse*: Machinery

Less is known about the machinery of the *Neuse* than about any other aspect of the ship. Judging from the layout of the surviving hull, a single boiler provided steam pressure for two engines that turned one shaft. Near the stern of the ship this single shaft was geared to turn two

propeller shafts. With this arrangement, it is doubtful that the propellers could act independently and be used to help maneuver the ship.

The best information available indicates that the ship's engine and boiler was taken from Pugh's Mill, a sawmill local to the border of Lenoir/Craven Counties. The boiler was able to produce about 800 horsepower according to a newspaper article from the time.

The ship's propellers probably had a diameter of about six feet because the screws on the *Albemarle* were of that size. It is also very likely that the shafts and screws were manufactured in Charlotte, NC, where the Confederate Navy had a facility for heavy forging. This navy yard is known to have produced the shafts and screws for the *Albemarle*.

CSS *Neuse*: Armament

The *Neuse* was armed with two double-banded 6.4" Brooke Rifles. These guns were the development of John Mercer Brooke, Chief of Ordnance and Hydrography for the Confederate Navy. He designed rifled cannons that were reinforced by shrinking wrought-iron bands around the breech of the gun. Rifling created much greater strains on cannons. Cast-iron, the main material for producing large artillery in that era is hard but very brittle and could burst under the great pressures present in rifled guns. By shrinking wrought-iron bands around the breech of a cast-iron cannon the gun could be strengthened to prevent bursting.

Brooke designed rifles in 4.62", 6.4", 7", and 8" calibers and banded smoothbores of 10" and 11" calibers. Of these weapons, the 6.4", 7", and 8" rifles were the main guns for Confederate ironclads. Brooke guns had one, two, or three reinforcing bands. The Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond and the Selma Naval Iron Works in Selma, Alabama were the main manufacturers of the guns.

Because of their long range, durability, and accuracy Brookes were, arguably, the best rifled artillery produced at the time in America. In action against Union ironclads they proved to be formidable weapons. Brooke 6.4" rifle would have a range of three to five miles. The range available from guns on an ironclad was reduced somewhat by the limited elevation possible from within the casemate.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Where was the *Neuse* recovered?** About one-half mile (4 blocks) down river, between the King and Queen Street bridges over the river.
2. **How much did the ship weigh?** An estimated 15 hundred tons, but we do not know exactly. We do know that the ship displaced 260 tons of water based on John Porter's design.
3. **What do you treat the ship with?** The ship was for years treated with a mixture of raw linseed oil and mineral spirits. The present-day treatment is Tim-bor, (sodium borate).
4. **How long has the ship been here?** Since June 2012, but it was at the West Vernon Ave since May 1964 until the move to this climate-controlled museum.
5. **How many Civil War ironclads are left now?** Four, the CSS *Jackson* in Columbus, GA, the USS *Cairo* in Vicksburg, MS and the *Monitor* in Norfolk, VA.
6. **Are there any ironclads that have been fully restored?** One, the HMS *Warrior* in Portsmouth, England.
7. **How can a ship have covered with so much iron float?** Displacement. Envision the ship as being a big balloon. An ironclad then, or even an aircraft carrier now, floats because most of the space in it is air, which is lighter than water. If a ship and its contents weigh less than that same volume of water, it will float. If it weighs more it will sink. Even though a balloon is made of rubber or latex, a balloon filled with helium floats because it is lighter than air.
8. **Why was the ship brought here?** The location in downtown Kinston is just a few blocks from both where the ship was docked to be outfitted and where it was recovered. This location also provides the necessary space to fully enclose and climate-control the remains with room remaining for exhibits about the ship and the area.
9. **Where did the Confederacy get iron?** Iron in the South could be mined in western Virginia, eastern Tennessee, and northern Alabama. Often the areas in western Virginia and eastern Tennessee were either under Union occupation or were being raided by Union forces. Another problem in mining was that the labor needed to mine ore was in the army.

QUICK REFERENCE: CS IRONCLADS

Standard Classes:

1. CSS *Richmond, Savannah, Chirora, Palmetto State, Raleigh, North Carolina*
(175' x 45' x 12')
2. CSS *Tennessee II* – (209' x 48' x 14')
CSS *Columbia* – (216' x 51' x 13')
CSS *Texas* – (217' x 48' x 13') never operational
3. CSS *Charleston* – (180' x 34' x 14')
CSS *Virginia II* – (197' x 47'6" x 14')
4. “**Diamond Hulls**”
CSS *Albemarle, Neuse* – (158' x 35' x 8')
CSS *Fredericksburg* – (188' x 40'3" x 11')
CSS *Tuscaloosa, Huntsville* – (152' x 34' x 8')
CSS *Jackson* – (225' x 60' x 8') never operational

Non-Standard:

- CSS *Virginia I* – (275' x 38'6" x 22')
- CSS *Mississippi* – (260' x 58' x 14') never operational
- CSS *Nashville* – (271' x 62'6" x 10'9") paddle wheels
- CSS *Louisiana* – (264' x 62' x?) paddle wheels
- CSS *Arkansas* – (165' x 35' x 11'6")
- CSS *Atlanta* – (204' x 41' x 15'9")
- CSS *Tennessee I* – (165' x 35' x 11'6") never operational
- CSS *Georgia* – (250' x 60' x?)
- CSS *Milledgeville* – (175' x 35' x 9') never operational
- CSS *Missouri* – (183' x 53'8" x 8'6") paddle wheels
- CSS *Manassas* – (134' x 33' x 17') privately built

Average Length: 194'

Sources: Navy Official Records: *Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War*; and Confederate Navy Symposium, May 1990

Union Navy:

War Outbreak:

- 43 vessels in commission (total)
- 23 vessels fit for service
- 13 vessels laid up for overhaul or completion

Vessels Acquired: (total)

418 purchased (313 Steam, 105 Sail)
208 built under contract

Ironclads:

58 Monitors begun
41 Monitors completed

20 Other types begun
19 Other types completed

5 Acquired by capture

Confederate Navy:

War Outbreak:

10 vessels acquired by capture or purchase
14 incorporated from state navies

Vessels (total) built or contracted for-

150+
27 completed

Disposition of Completed Confederate Ironclads-

Scuttled or abandoned - *Virginia I, Virginia II, Richmond, Fredericksburg, Neuse, Arkansas, Charleston, Palmetto State, Savannah, Georgia, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Louisiana, Manassas*

Sunk (not by enemy action) – *Raleigh, North Carolina, Columbia*

Surrendered – *Missouri, Atlanta, Tennessee II, Nashville*

Sunk by enemy action – *Albemarle*

Armor Plating:

Dimensions – 2” x 7” x 14’-15’ (width could vary from 6” to 8”)

Material – Wrought Iron, used for armor, is relatively soft as opposed
Chemically, wrought iron is virtually pure iron. Cast iron, from which most
cannons were made, is iron with a high carbon content, 2% or more.
Steel falls between wrought iron and cast iron in terms of carbon
content.

Sources - Armor plates were rolled principally at the Tredegar Iron Works in
Richmond and at the Schofield & Markham Rolling Mill in Atlanta.
The Shelby County Iron Works in Columbiana, Alabama and the

Selma Naval Iron Works in Selma each rolled a limited quantity.

Railroad Iron – As a last resort standard railroad “T” rails were used as armor. The *Arkansas*, *Louisiana*, *Missouri*, and *Georgia* were armored with “T” rail.

Brooke Rifles:

Designer – John Mercer Brooke

Characteristics – The guns were made of cast iron with wrought iron bands shrunk around the breech of the piece to prevent the gun from bursting when fired. One to three bands were used.

Calibers - Brooke designed rifles of 4.62”, 6.4”, 7” and 8” calibers. He also designed smoothbores of 10” and 11” calibers. The 6.4”, 7” and 8” rifles were the main weapons for Confederate ironclads.

Sources – The major manufactures of Brooke guns were the Tredegar Iron Works and the Selma Naval Iron Works.

CSS *NEUSE*: ANNOTATED SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archbell, L. V. "The Confederate Ram *Neuse*." *Carolina and the Southern Cross*, 1, November 1913: 3-5

This article bears listing only because it does deal with the *Neuse*. It contains some glaring inaccuracies and makes some claims that stretch the imagination. While interesting reading, this article cannot be regarded as a good source of information about the ship.

Richard H. Bacot Papers. Raleigh, NC: NC Division of Archives and History.

The papers of Richard H. Bacot, a lieutenant on the *Neuse*, are the best primary source of information about the ship. A series of letters to "sis" are particularly revealing about the life of the crew. His papers also contain the only known contemporary sketches of the vessel.

Charles Eugene Porter Papers. Fredericksburg, Virginia. Central Rappahannock Historical Center.

The site acquired copies of 23 letters from Porter's collection during his service as Gunner on board the CSS *Neuse*. These give added insight about the *Neuse* and Kinston during the time.

Bright, Leslie S., et al. *CSS Neuse: A Question of Iron and Time*. Raleigh, NC: NC Division of Archives and History, 1981

This book is the best secondary source of information about the ship. It covers the entire history of the vessel, but the recovery is dealt with especially well. The book also includes drawings of the ship and of the artifacts recovered from it.

Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. 31 vols. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894-1927

The official records, while generally regarded as the starting point for any Research into the Civil War, provide only a limited amount of information about the *Neuse*. The records are still valuable, nonetheless. Interesting material regarding the Federal raising of the *Albemarle* from the Roanoke River in 1865 can be found as well.

Still, William N. "The Career of the Confederate Ironclad *Neuse*." *North Carolina Historical Review*. January 1966: 1-13

Though twenty-five years old and newer research has proven some parts of it to be false, this article continues to be a helpful resource for the construction and career of the ship. This article along with *CSS Neuse: A Question of Iron and Time* is vital to gaining knowledge of the *Neuse*.

War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 130 vols. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901

As with the naval official records, the army official records unfortunately provide a limited amount of information about the *Neuse*. The army records do offer evidence of the great delays in completion of the ship. The army records show the attitudes, ranging from fear to scorn, of the *Neuse*, by the Union officers in New Bern.

Related Materials:

Anderson, Bern. *By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil War.* New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1862

This is the only general naval history of the war included in this list. Though it should not be relied upon for specific details, this work does present an overall sketch of the naval activities of both sides. It is written from more of a Union perspective but, it is not biased against the South.

Barrett, John G. *The Civil War in North Carolina.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1963

This is a thorough description of the events of the war in North Carolina. This does give a good account of the story of the *Albemarle*. A reading of this book allows one to fit the *Neuse* into context of the larger war.

Bearss, Edwin C. *Hardluck Ironclad.* Baton Rouge, La: Louisiana State University Press, 1980

This is the story of the USS *Cairo*, one of the few other ironclads on display. The *Cairo* was raised from the Yazoo River in the early 1960's. Though the ship was intact at the start of the project, and well-meaning historians worked on it, much irreparable damage was done before the National Park Service took over the ship in the early 1970's. The park service has partially restored the ship to portray its original look.

Clark, Walter, ed. *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865.* 5 vols. Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, Printers, 1901

This five-volume set is a compilation of histories of the North Carolina regiments and independent battalions of the war. Each of the histories

is written by a surviving member of the unit. Volume 5 contains a fascinating history of the *Albemarle* written by Gilbert Elliott, one of the contractors hired to build the vessel.

Davis, William, C. *Duel Between the first Ironclads*. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1975

As the title suggests this book describes the first clash between armored ships, the *Virginia* – *Monitor* battle on March 9, 1862. It also describes the origins of the two combatants and their respective fates after the famous battle.

Dew, Charles B. *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works*. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co. 1987

This book covers the wartime history of the Tredegar Iron Works, largest foundry in the South at the time of the war. Tredegar rolled much of the iron armor for the *Neuse*, the *Albemarle*, and many of the other Southern ironclads. The reader gains an appreciation of the difficulty the firm faced in obtaining raw materials for production of ordnance, armor and other material.

Gibbons, Tony. *Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War*. New York, NY: Gallery Books-W. H. Smith Publishers, Inc, 1989

This is a large reference book with pictures and article length entries on many of the ships of the war. There is a list of all ships of both sides. There are a few factual errors, but it is still a handy, useful quick reference book.

Lambert, Andrew. *Warrior: The World's First Ironclad, Then and Now*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1987

This is the story of the HMS *Warrior*, the world's second ironclad, and first iron-hulled armored ship. This vessel was restored to its original condition in the mid-1980's after the ship had lain for years as a mooring hulk at a fuel oil dock. This is the only ironclad on display outside the United States, and the only one fully restored in the world.

Ripley, Warren. *Artillery and Ammunition of the Civil War*. Charleston, SC: The Battery Press, 1984

This is an invaluable reference book for Civil War artillery. There is a chapter about Brooke guns, the type the *Neuse* carried. There is also a chapter about each of the other major types of artillery used in the war. Tables at the back of the book are very helpful.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of the Confederate States Navy*. Fairfax Press, 1972

Written by a former Confederate naval officer this book was published

first in 1887. This is an early history of the navy, written even before the official records had been published. It is based upon interviews, early research and the author's own experiences.

Still, William, N. Jr. *Confederate Shipbuilding*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1969
This relatively small volume is devoted to the various aspects of the Confederate shipbuilding program such as materials, labor, and facilities. It is a very good book for understanding how the fledgling Confederate Navy attempted to overcome the many obstacles it faced.

Still, William, N. Jr. *Iron Afloat*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1985
This is an excellent history of the Confederate ironclad program. It covers the whole of the subject from the James River Squadron to the Charleston Squadron to the armored ships built for the western rivers. One chapter is devoted to the four ironclads built in North Carolina. This book is almost essential reading, along with the CSS *Neuse: A Question of Iron and Time*, for an interpreter at this site.

Tucker, Spencer. *Arming the Fleet*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989
This book traces the history of naval guns and gunnery in the muzzle-loading era. Of interest are sections on the manufacture of iron and casting of cannon, the development of the shell gun, and the chapter on Civil War naval artillery. It is a good source for a more in-depth knowledge of naval guns of that era.

This is not by any means a complete list of sources for information. It is merely a listing of those in which I am familiar. There may be additions to this list as I have opportunity to examine other materials.

North Carolina Ironclads

Ironclads were built in North Carolina for two purposes. First was the protection of Wilmington and the approaches to the Cape Fear River. This port was of vital importance because it was a haven for blockade running. For this reason, numerous forts, including Fort Fisher, were built near the mouth of the Cape Fear in addition to the ironclad vessels.

The second reason for the construction of ironclads was the recapture of the sounds. General Ambrose Burnside's campaign of early 1862 resulted in the capture of New Bern, Plymouth, Roanoke Island, and Fort Macon, which guarded Beaufort Harbor. The recapture of this region became a high priority for the state and Confederate governments. Because of the presence of Union gunboats, retaking those regions would require naval support. For that reason, also the Confederate Navy built ironclads in the state.

The four ironclads completed in North Carolina were designed by John L. Porter, Chief Confederate Naval Constructor, and reflected the navy's decision to downsize its ships. Two, the *Raleigh* and the *North Carolina*, were built in Wilmington and were among the most poorly constructed Confederate ironclads. These ships were each 175 feet long, 45 feet at the beam and draft of 13 feet. Begun in early 1862, these vessels had inglorious careers. The *Raleigh* escorted two blockade runners to sea in May 1864, and traded shots with one of the blockading ships. While returning through New Inlet the ship ran aground on a falling tide and eventually broke her back. The *North Carolina's* fate was even worse. This vessel sank at her mooring from a rotten, worm-eaten bottom.

In the fall of 1862, the Confederate Navy issued contracts for the construction of three additional ironclads. These vessels were to be small, shallow draft vessels 158 feet long. They would be 34 feet wide and draw 8 feet of water. These ships were intended to wrest control of the state's coastal region away from the Union. To keep them as safe as possible from potential destruction in Union raids, they had to be built well inland.

The first was contracted to J. G. Martin and Gilbert Elliott on September 17, 1862 for construction in Tarboro on the Tar River. On October 10, 1862, the same shipbuilders were authorized to build another ship on the same terms at Edward's Ferry on the Roanoke River. Shortly afterward, Thomas S. Howard and Elijah W. Ellis received the contract to build the third ironclad, which would become the *Neuse*, at Whitehall on the Neuse River. The Tarboro ironclad was never completed. It was still on the stocks when it was destroyed during a Union raid in July 1863.

The Edward's Ferry ironclad went on to become the successful *Albemarle*. After having been fitted out in Halifax, N. C. the ship was commissioned and ordered downriver to participate in an attack on Plymouth on April 17, 1864. The ship was so new that there were still mechanics and carpenters working to fasten the last of the iron plates to the casemate as she steamed downriver.

The *Albemarle* finally neared Plymouth early on the morning of April 19, 1864. Lying in wait were the steamers *Miami* and *Southfield*, the two most powerful gunboats the Union Navy had in the area. The ships were linked together by large hawser ropes to entangle the ironclad between them. On arriving at Plymouth, Commander James A. Cooke aboard the *Albemarle* recognized the tactic and steered his ship close to the north bank of the river before swinging south toward the two ships. The ironclad reached the *Miami* first and glanced off the wooden ship's bow leaving only superficial damage and plowed directly into the *Southfield's* starboard

bow. The impact tore a gaping hole through to the boiler room and the doomed ship began settling to the bottom.

The *Albemarle* nearly followed its victim as its bow stuck fast in the side of the sinking ship. The ironclad's straining engines were unable to reverse fast enough, and soon water began pouring in through the forward gun port. When the *Southfield* hit the bottom of the river the bow of the *Albemarle* finally slipped free. The *Albemarle*, while trapped by the sinking gunboat, was subjected to point-blank fire from the *Miami*. The four-inch iron of the casemate proved impervious, and one of the ricocheting shells landed back on the deck of the *Miami* exploding and killing Charles Flusser, the commanding officer.

After the *Miami* withdrew downriver the *Albemarle* provided valuable fire support by shelling enemy shore positions. General Henry Wessels surrendered the Union garrison at 10:00 AM on April 20, 1864, ending one of the Confederacy's most successful combined land and sea operations of the war. The presence of the *Albemarle* to scatter the Union fleet and shell shore positions was the decisive factor.

On the May 5th, the *Albemarle* and the small wooden steamers *Bombshell* and *Cotton Plant* steamed down the Roanoke River into Albemarle Sound on their way to New Bern. The *Neuse* originally had been scheduled to go to New Bern, but it ran aground, leading to the use of the *Albemarle* as its replacement. As these ships entered the sound seven Union gunboats mounting a total of sixty guns attacked them. The *Cotton Plant* escaped back up the river, but the *Bombshell* was late receiving orders to withdraw and was captured. The *Albemarle* remained in action for over three hours inflicting heavy damage. The ironclad, though, was unable to continue to New Bern because she too was badly damaged. The muzzle of the stern gun had been shot off, several plates had been knocked loose, her tiller ropes were parted, and her smokestack was riddled. Because of the damage to the stack, bacon, lard, butter, and even wood from the ship's furnishings was thrown into the boilers to keep up enough steam pressure to limp back to Plymouth.

The *Albemarle* did not leave the Roanoke again, but she did remain a constant threat to the Federal control of the sounds. Realizing that before Plymouth and the surrounding area could be retaken, the ironclad would have to be destroyed or captured, the Federals decided upon a plan to sink the vessel using a steam launch with a spar torpedo.

On October 27th Lt. William Cushing and an all-volunteer crew took a small steam powered launch upriver to Plymouth. Under heavy rifle fire from the riverbank he approached the ironclad. The bow of the launch slid over a log boom set in the river to protect the ironclad, and Cushing lowered the torpedo below the *Albemarle*'s waterline and exploded it. Though only Cushing and one of his crew escaped (the rest were killed or captured), the job had been done. The Confederate ironclad was sunk.

With the *Albemarle* destroyed, Confederates quickly abandoned the town. Upon retaking the town, Federal authorities immediately began exploring the possibility of re-floating the ship. This was successfully done on March 18, 1865. The following month it was towed to Norfolk, Va. where it remained for the next two and one-half years while officially listed as the USS *Albemarle*. The vessel was eventually stripped of its guns and armor and sold at public auction on October 15, 1867 to J. N. Leonard & Co. for \$3,200.

Ships of the Civil War



The Old Line: Sloops of War

Library of Congress

The sloop-of-war, protected by wood and driven purely by wind power, was a common sight early in the 19th century.



Little Helpers: Schooners

Library of Congress

Schooners were small sailing ships that were usually assigned to support duties within the fleet.



Technological Advancement: Screw Sloops

Library of Congress

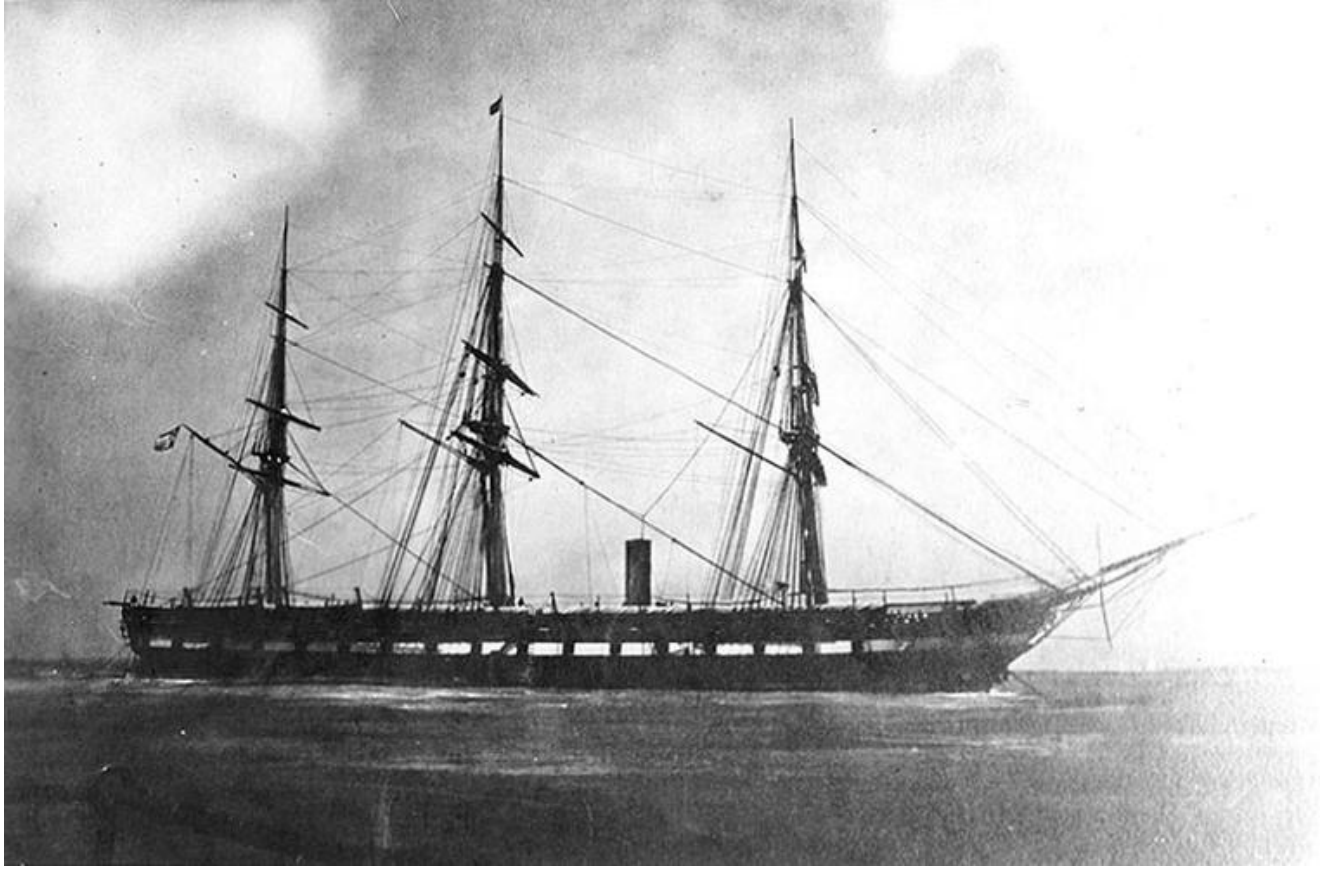
Screw sloops were fast and lightly armed steamships that used propellers to move through the water.



CSS Alabama

Naval Historical Center

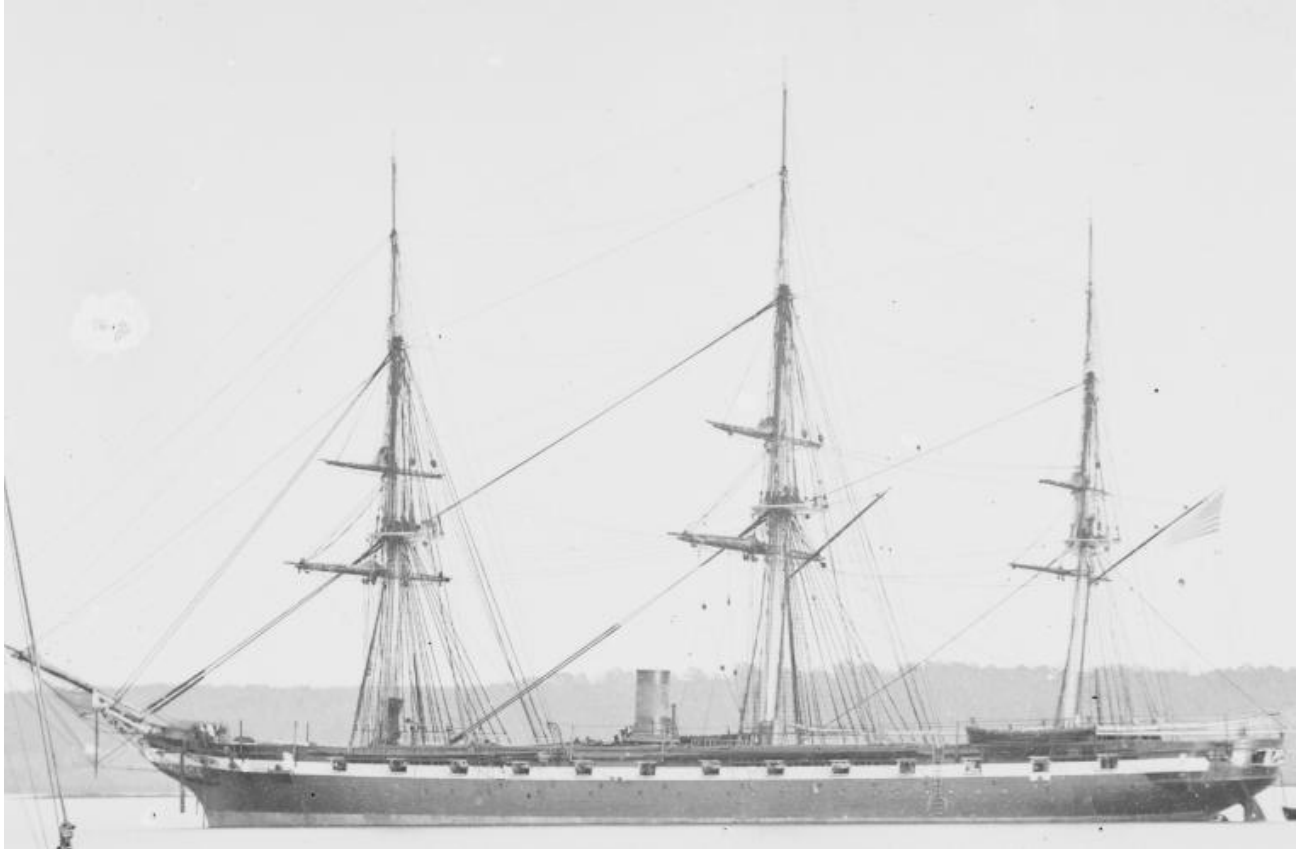
The screw-sloop CSS Alabama was the most famous Confederate raider of the war, capturing or sinking over 60 prizes.



Propulsion and Power: Steam Frigates

Naval Historical Center

Steam frigates were larger and more powerful than steam sloops, although they sacrificed speed in exchange.



USS Kearsarge

Library of Congress

The USS Kearsarge sank CSS Alabama off the coast of France after an intense duel on June 19, 1864.



River Menace: The Double Ender

Library of Congress

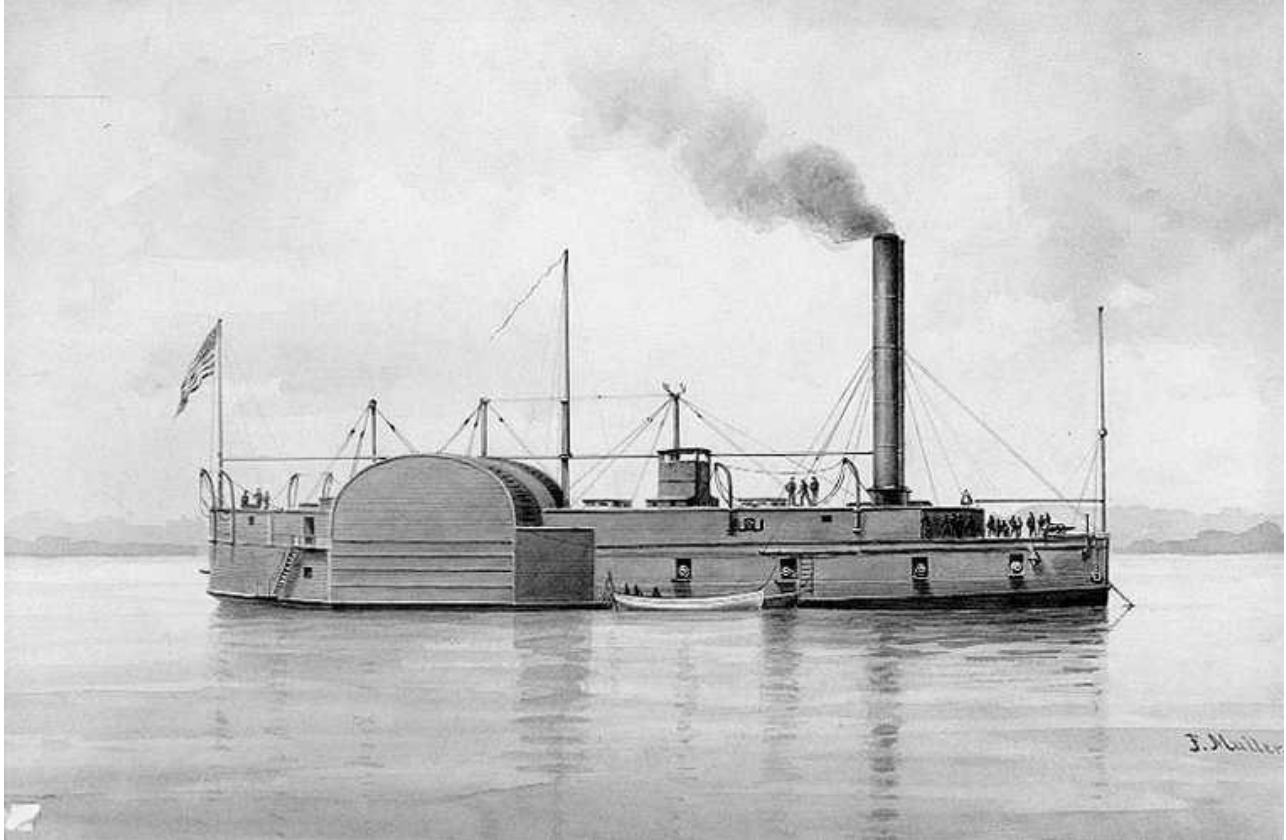
Double enders were steam-powered ships with steering capability on both ends, allowing them to move backward and forward without turning around.



Repurposed: Paddle Steamers

Library of Congress

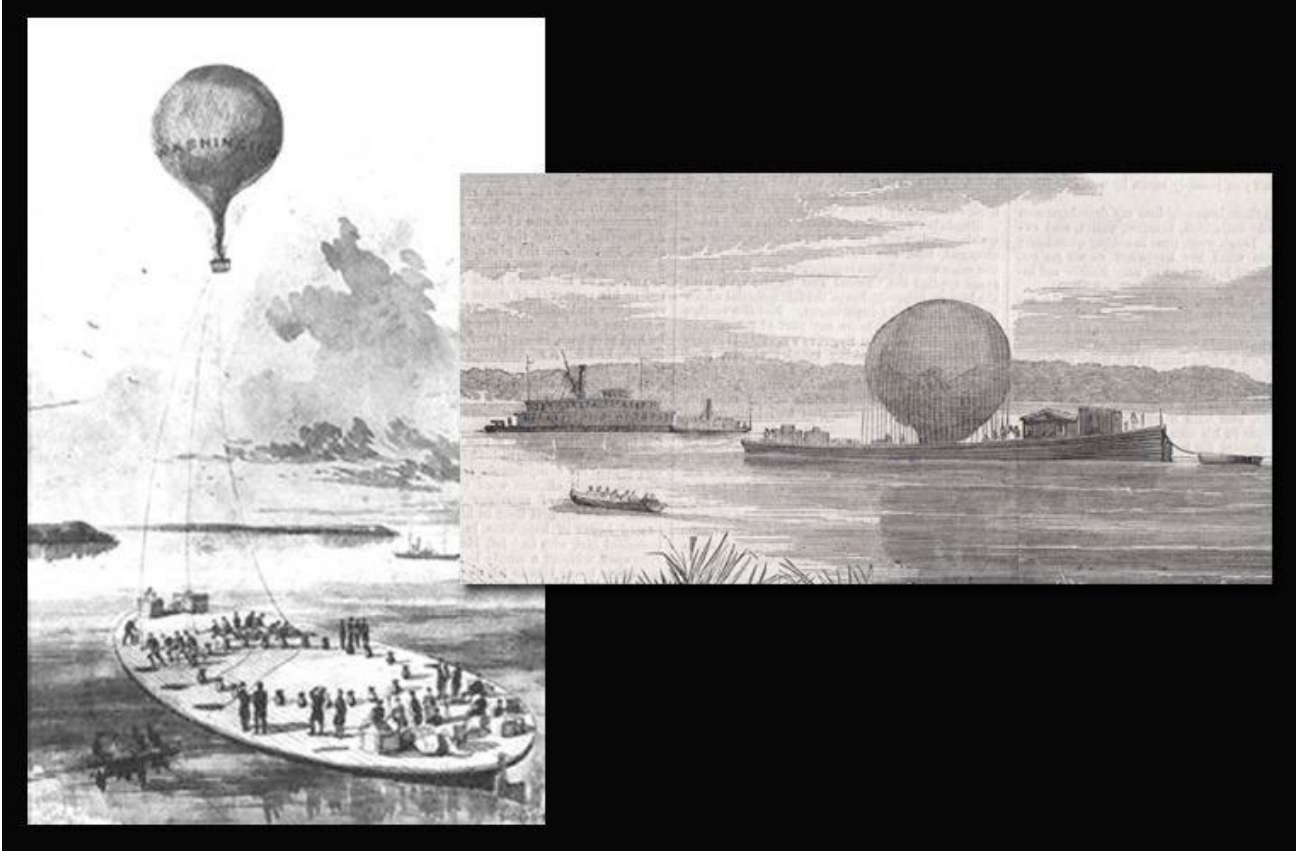
Hundreds of riverboats and ferries were pressed into military service as gunboats, transports, and floating hospitals.



USS Lexington

Naval Historical Center

The USS Lexington was one of the war's most illustrious timberclad gunboats, one of the longest serving vessels on the western rivers. She, along with the USS Tyler and the USS Conestoga, participated in the "Timberclad Raid" of 1862, capturing or forcing the destruction of nine Confederate ships along the Tennessee River in four days.



No Joke: Aircraft Carriers

Library of Congress

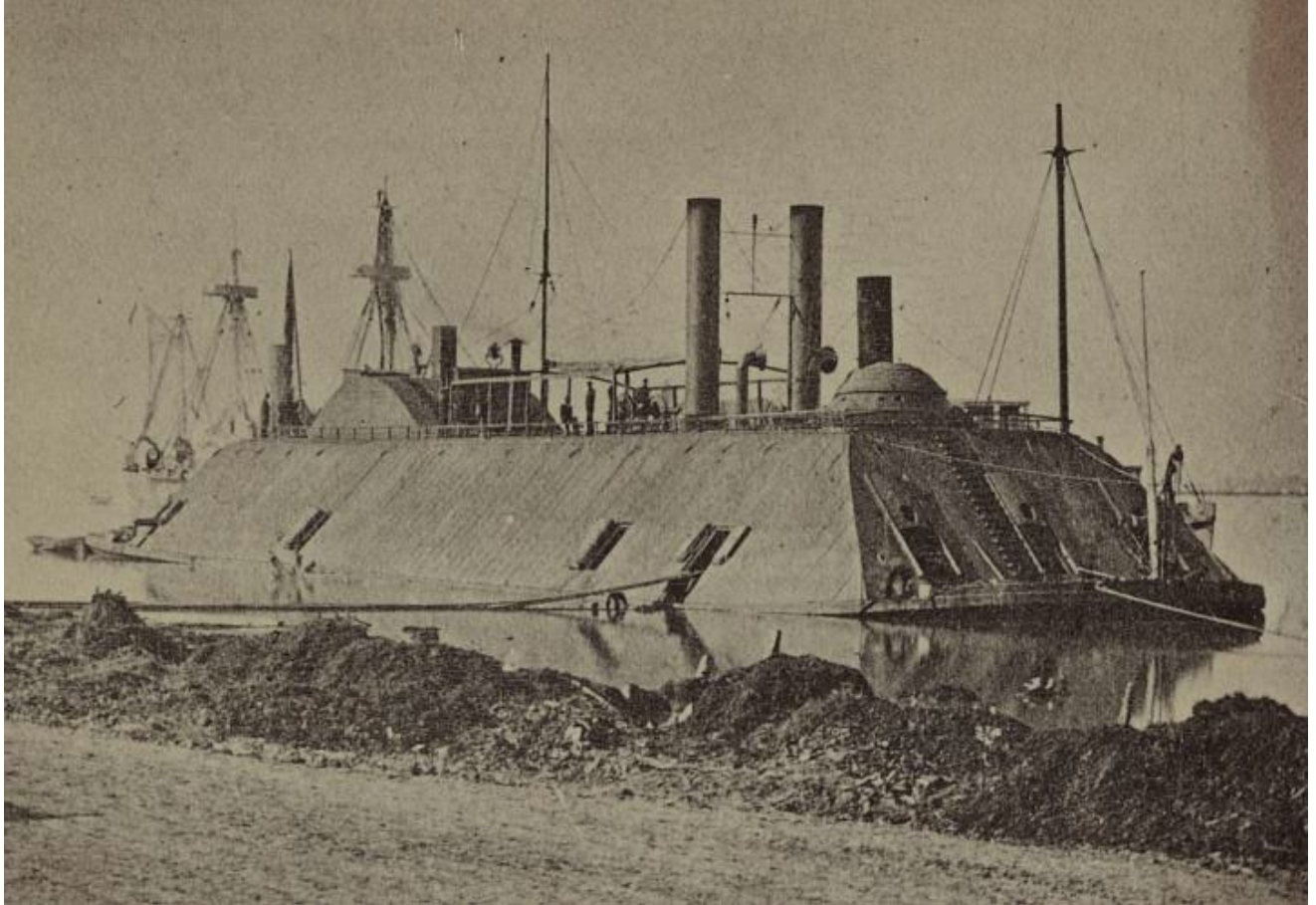
Specialized ships were built to transport and launch observation balloons.



The Face of the New Navy: Ironclads

Library of Congress

The invention of ironclads set a new standard in naval combat.



A Fortress on the Water: Casemate Ironclads

Library of Congress

"Casemate" ironclads like the USS Essex protected their gun crews with sloped armor plating.



Iron Innovation: Monitors

Library of Congress

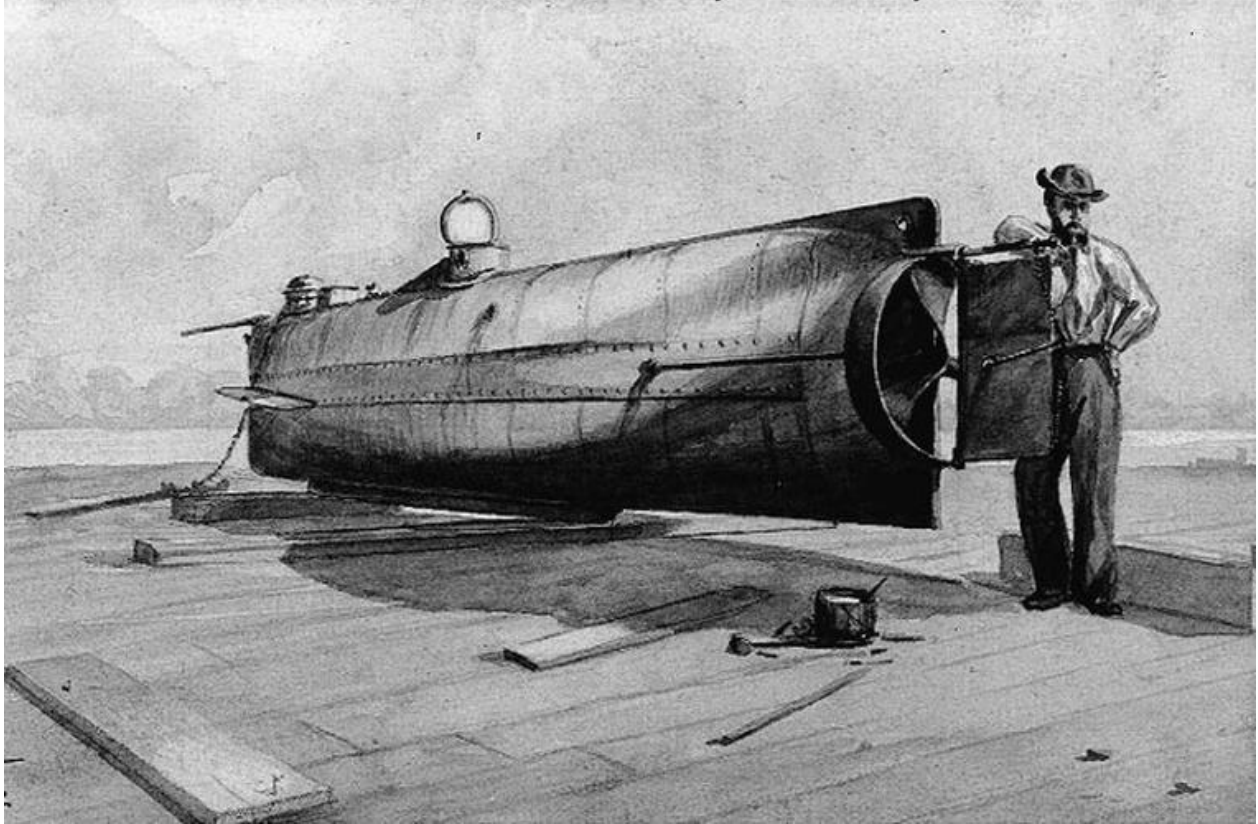
Monitor-class ironclads introduced heavy revolving turrets to the naval battlescape. The ship shown here, the USS Onandaga, sports an unusual additional turret.



USS Monitor

Library of Congress

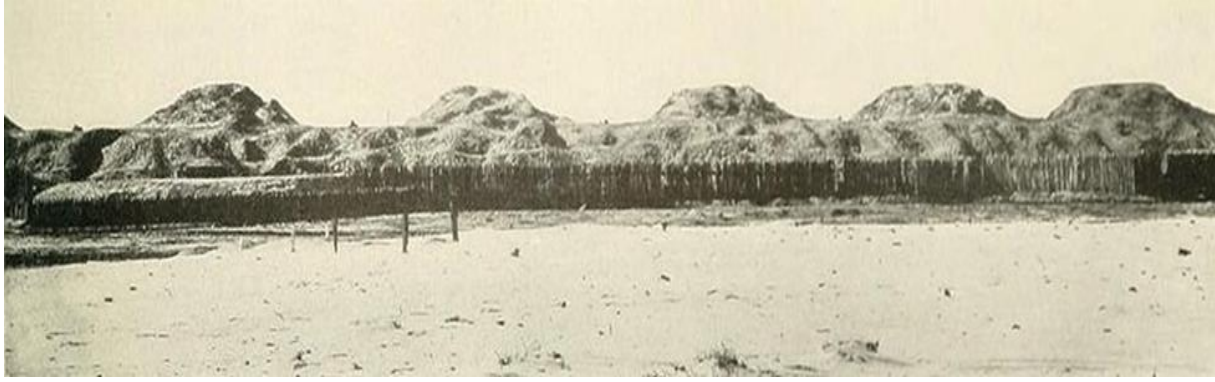
The USS Monitor, designed by John Ericsson, was one of the first three ironclads approved for construction by the Federal Navy. She fought the CSS Virginia to a standstill in the world's first battle between ironclad warships at Hampton Roads in 1862.



The Future: Submarines

Library of Congress

The CSS Hunley, first launched in 1863, was the first military submarine in world history to sink an enemy ship in combat. Although the Hunley's success was extremely limited--and fatal to her crew--she forever changed the nature of naval warfare.



FORT FISHER STATE HISTORIC SITE EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE GUIDE



Fort Fisher State Historic Site
1610 Fort Fisher Boulevard, South
Kure Beach, NC 28449

P: 910-251-7340

Website: <https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/fort-fisher>

Group Services Coordinator: Kaitlin O'Connor

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Greetings!

Dear Valued Educator,

Thank you for your interest in Fort Fisher State Historic Site!

This resource guide contains a brief history of Fort Fisher, information on our on-site activities and group programs, as well as pre- and post-visit lesson plans. You'll also see how our educational programs and resources meet North Carolina's Standard Course of Study requirements.

Our goal is to provide valuable and memorable educational opportunities for students (and adults!) visiting our site. We hope everyone who visits Fort Fisher learns something while having fun. I hope this collection of resources will help you educate and inspire your students before, during, and after your visit here.

On behalf of all the staff at Fort Fisher, we look forward to your visit. In the meantime, if we can be of any assistance with educational materials or history resources, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin O'Connor

Kaitlin O'Connor
Interpreter II - Education and Outreach Coordinator
Fort Fisher State Historic Site

A Brief History of Fort Fisher

This brief history focuses on the story of Fort Fisher during the Civil War and World War II. For broader history from pre-European contact to the present, please contact Kaitlin O'Connor at kaitlin.oconnor@ncdcr.gov. Please note that Fort Fisher stretched beyond the borders of the historic site's property today. It included land currently owned and operated by our State Historic Site, the State Recreation Area, the North Carolina Aquarium, and NC Wildlife Boat Ramp.

Why Here?



1855 Map of Cape Fear & New Inlet

From about 1840 - 1910, Wilmington was the largest city in North Carolina. The port city facilitated millions of dollars of trade annually, which in turn attracted thousands of jobs. Trading ships relied on skilled river pilots to guide them up the Cape Fear River's shifting shoals and strong currents to the docks in Wilmington. In the nineteenth hundreds, there were two inlets to the river creatively called the "Old Inlet" and "New Inlet." A hurricane created the second or "new" inlet in September 1761, which was about ten miles closer to Wilmington.¹

The United States government repeatedly considered building a fortification on the east side of the Cape Fear River (known as "Federal Point") along the New Inlet. During

the War of 1812, the U.S. Army stationed a regiment at Federal Point and tasked them with

¹ "October 17," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 19, 1761, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/39395677> (accessed April 28, 2022).

constructing a fort to guard the port of Wilmington, but the post was soon abandoned after the war.²

By 1840, railroad connected Wilmington with Raleigh, the state's capital. By the dawn of the Civil War, railroad tracks connected Wilmington to Fredericksburg, Virginia. The private tracks carried both civilian and military goods from the port city throughout the upper southeast.³ Even before North Carolina seceded from the United States, white residents along the Cape Fear recognized the importance of securing the port city's vital maritime trade routes. Local militias seized control of existing forts on the Cape Fear (Fort Johnston and Fort Caswell) in January 1861 - months before North Carolina's secession. Construction to improve upon existing forts and create new river defenses was well underway by the time North Carolina left the Union on May 20, 1861.⁴

Building Fort Fisher

Fort Fisher became the largest earthen fort in the Confederacy. The fort stretched down the southern tip of Federal Point (quickly renamed "Confederate Point"⁵). Fort Fisher was shaped like a 7 down the coast. The small leg of that 7 - the land face - spanned about 500 yards from the Atlantic Ocean to the Cape Fear River. The larger portion covered just over a mile along the coastline. Only about ten percent of the original fortification remains today.

Construction on Fort Fisher began in April 1861. The white garrison set to work shoveling sand and constructing wooden supports for the earthworks. Within a month, newspapers reported African American laborers building Confederate defenses and forts along the Cape Fear River, which included Fort Fisher. Free African Americans from New Bern and Sampson

² "Military Tour," *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 13, 1814, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/604288568> (accessed April 28, 2022); "Raleigh," *Weekly Raleigh Register*, September 23, 1814, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/58184395> (accessed April 28, 2022).

³ George A. Kennedy, "Wilmington & Weldon Railroad," *NCPedia*, Online Article, 2006, <https://www.ncpedia.org/wilmington-weldon-railroad> (accessed April 29, 2022).

⁴ Wilson Angley, "A History of the Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson Site in Brunswick County, North Carolina," *North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources* (1998), 55; "Duplin is right," *Wilmington Journal*, May 2, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/56966354> (accessed February 2, 2020).

⁵ "Updates," *The Daily Journal*, May 13, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/90833822> (accessed January 16, 2020).

County arrived at Fort Fisher in the first week in May.⁶ Local newspapers reported on the construction labor of free African Americans as if Black men supported the Confederacy. The *Newbern Daily Progress* noted that “fifteen free men of color left this place...for the mouth of the Cape Fear, volunteers in service of the State. They were in fine spirits, and each wore a placard on his hat bearing the inscription, ‘WE WILL DIE BY THE SOUTH.’”⁷ Free African Americans may have agreed to these labor positions for the limited money, but most served due to peer pressure.⁸

As war broke out, white Southerners feared that free blacks would inspire and plot slave revolts against the Confederacy and otherwise disrupt the South’s war effort. In response, white authorities reassured their community and issued threats of violence against African Americans in the same breath. The *Wilmington Journal* editor proclaimed that “There are in North Carolina about three white men to every slave. The white men are armed, intelligent; they *know* what is occurring. The idea of a negro insurrection is therefore so foolish, that it only deserves to be met as that of the Helots was - with cowhides.”⁹ Free African Americans in North Carolina served the South by contributing to the construction of Fort Fisher, but they did not support the Confederacy. They were under strict watch and regulations. In other words, free African Americans worked at Fort Fisher to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

In addition to free African American labor, hundreds of enslaved men constructed the sand traverses of Fort Fisher. For well over a year, enslavers considered it a patriotic duty to provide labor to the war through their enslaved men.¹⁰ However, as the war dragged on, the planter class - those with the most wealth, enslaved people, and political power - resisted

⁶ *Wilmington Journal*, May 2, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/56966354> (accessed February 2, 2020); “Free Colored Population,” *Newbern Daily Progress*, May 3, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/54052139> (accessed February 11, 2020).

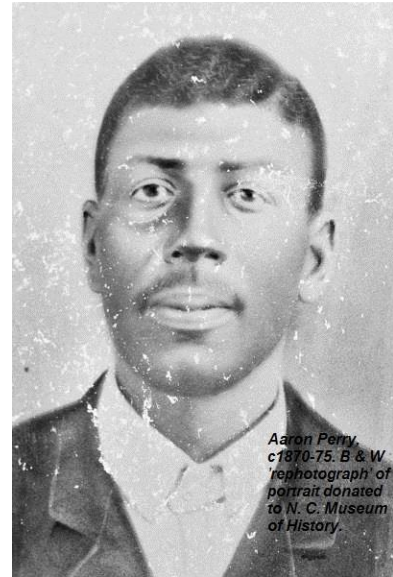
⁷ “Free Colored Population,” *Newbern Daily Progress*, May 3, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/54052139> (accessed February 11, 2020).

⁸ Jamie Martinez, “Confederate Labor Impressment in North Carolina,” Beat the Heat Lecture Series at Fort Fisher State Historic Site, June 11, 2016.

⁹ “Free Negroes of the State,” *Wilmington Journal*, May 9, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/56966360> (accessed February 2, 2020).

¹⁰ Martinez, *Confederate Slave Impressment*, 146.

impressment. Too often, enslaved men came home in horrible physical condition.¹¹ Enslaved men like Hamp Cuthbertson and Henry Pratt were sent by their enslavers to Fort Fisher. Hamp Cuthbertson said he “endur[ed] sever privation, hunger, illness and punishments” during his year at Fort Fisher.¹² Henry Pratt later wrote “oh, how we suffered for something to eat and you know how I came home all crippled up from the exposure and work and am till this day [47 years later] suffering from the effects of it.”¹³ Impressment of slave labor became a major political headache for leaders like North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance and Wilmington commander Major General William Whiting during the war. But the extensive physical labor with inadequate care left the biggest toll on hundreds of free and enslaved laborers.



Aaron Perry was one of hundreds of Black and American Indian laborers at Fort Fisher.

In December 1862, the North Carolina legislature passed a bill that allowed the Confederate Army to require free people of color to build fortification and defenses. This act was passed in response to Major General Whiting requesting enslaved laborers from Robeson County. The legislatures pointed out there was “an unusually large number of free persons of color not subject to militia duty” in Robeson County, and thus permitted those men to be “conscripted” into labor service.¹⁴ These men were American Indians. From 1863 through the end of the war, the Confederate Army separated Indigenous men from their families and sent them to build Fort Fisher.

The Confederate Army’s reliance on non-white laborers reflected the racial hierarchy in the South. In March 1861, Vice President of the Confederate States Alexander Stephens addressed a white crowd in Savannah, Georgia. In his speech, he outlined the improvements in the Confederate constitution over the U.S. Constitution. Among those, Stephens noted, “the new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our

¹¹ Martinez, *Confederate Slave Impressment*, 55; Kevin Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War’s Most Persistent Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 42.

¹² Hamp Cuthbertson’s Application, North Carolina Soldier’s Application for Pension, July 11, 1927, *North Carolina Digital Archives*, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll21/id/16569/> (accessed April 26, 2022).

¹³ Henry Pratt to Unknown, *Fort Fisher State Historic Site Archives*, May 12, 1910.

¹⁴ “Resolutions to Employ Free Persons of Color on Fortifications, &c.”

peculiar institution of African slavery as it exists amongst us the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization...Our new government[‘s]...foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition.”¹⁵ Confederate officers expected their white soldiers to build fortifications in addition to their military training and drill duties. Soldiering was honorable and expected of white men. Extensive physical labor - especially when others could perform it - was not. In May 1861, the *Richmond Examiner* editor complained that white soldiers “were toiling in lifting heavy timbers and in all sorts of arduous and unsuitable work.” The editor concluded there was “great need” for Black labor to fill these rolls.¹⁶

When Colonel William Lamb and Major General William Whiting took command of Fort Fisher and the Wilmington Department, respectively, they ramped up construction efforts. Whiting petitioned military and civilian officials for more African American laborers. For over two and a half years he consistently requested more Black men for Fort Fisher and other Wilmington Department posts to fill labor needs. He even complained to his superior that the fort’s soldiers were unable to man the guns because they were “compelled to labor constantly, owing to the backwardness of the people in furnishing negroes to work upon the fortifications.”¹⁷

Running the U.S. Navy Blockade

U.S. Army Major General Winfield Scott, considered the finest American military officer of his day, proposed the Anaconda Plan as a strategy to defeat the Confederacy and preserve the United States union. The plan recognized the weakness of the South in sustaining a prolonged war without foreign trade. As a slave-based agrarian economy, Southern states had few factories to produce the weaponry necessary for



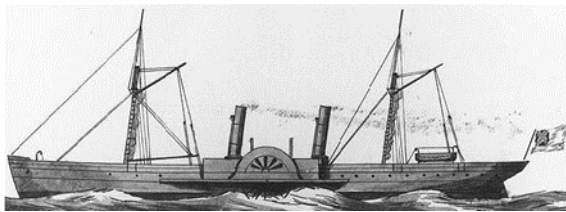
¹⁵ Alexander Stephens, “Cornerstone Address,” March 21, 1861, Speech, published on American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/cornerstone-speech>.

¹⁶ “The River Batteries,” *Daily Journal*, May 20, 1861, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/90829174> (accessed January 16, 2020).

¹⁷ Maj. Gen. W. H.C. Whiting to Gen. Samuel Cooper, October 4, 1863 in United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 770.

their hopeful revolution. Scott believed the North would succeed if they severed Confederate trade. The Anaconda Plan called for the U.S. Navy to close Southern port cities by blockade while the U.S. Army took control of the Mississippi River and captured key eastern coastal cities. Much like a snake, this Anaconda Plan would slowly surround the seceded states, cut off the supplies, and slowly squeeze the (metaphorical) life out of the rebellion.¹⁸

The Confederacy responded to the threat of blockade by purchasing a fleet of sleek, maneuverable ships called blockade runners. Individual states, the Confederate government, and businessmen purchased specially designed cargo ships from European shipyards. These



ships were specifically designed to outrun and outmaneuver larger, bulkier U.S. Navy vessels. They had shallow drafts, meaning the bottom of the ship did not go very far into the water so they could more easily sail in shallow waters.

Blockade runners would race to the shoreline and sail along the coast under the cover of Confederate fortifications and cannons.¹⁹

At that time, Wilmington was North Carolina's principal seaport. It could not have been better suited for blockade running. The city was out of range of a U.S. naval bombardment from the ocean. Its position in the middle of the Atlantic seaboard was ideal for merchant ships sailing from Europe. The cargo brought in from blockade runners included both military and civilian goods such as bayonets, cannonballs, coffee, wool socks, and candles. Wilmington's railroad lines were close to the port docks, so goods could easily be loaded on the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad for shipment to the frontlines of the war in Virginia. After, the blockade runners would take cotton, tobacco, and other agricultural goods back to European controlled ports to trade for more civilian and military supplies.

Life at Fort Fisher

Life at Fort Fisher during the Civil War was difficult for all, but in very different ways. For the white garrison, their days were tightly structured between military exercises, construction detail, and watch. "Work, work - all the time and no rest except Sabbaths," one

¹⁸ CITE

¹⁹

Confederate soldier complained, “Every man that is able to work has to go from morning til night preparing to receive Uncle Abraham.”²⁰ During their free time, the Confederate garrison entertained themselves with card games, gambling, reading, music, and even fishing. On occasion, soldiers would travel into Wilmington, which provided better options for food and recreation.

The non-white laborers were forced to work hard. They typically worked in teams of three to shovel, move, and stack dirt or to build structures out of lumber.²¹ The Confederate Army struggled to provide enough clothing and food for their soldiers, and too often African Americans and American Indian laborers received inadequate food and supplies.²² In their limited free time, black and Indigenous



Americans networked with each other. Enslaved people had long shared important information learned while working in the background of white-controlled spaces. They might have shared what they heard about upcoming work assignments, troop movements, or even possible avenues to freedom.

Resistance & Freedom

American Indians resisted attempts by the Confederate Army to conscript them into service. The Confederate Home Guard, tasked with selecting eligible free men of color as laborers, often rode into Lumbee land near Robeson County, N.C. and captured young men. New laborers were forced to march or board a train to Wilmington. The Home Guard worked fast; they did not provide Lumbee men an opportunity to gather personal affects or say goodbye to their families. In response, Lumbee men would “lay out” in the countryside for days to weeks

²⁰ “M.L. to Miss Mollie,” January 4, 1863, Marg Margaret McNeil Papers in Gragg, *Confederate Goliath*, 22

²¹ Martinez, “Confederate Impressment,” Fort Fisher State Historic Site Lecture, June 11, 2022.

²² Jamie Martinez, *Confederate Slave Impressment In The Upper South* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 54, 163.

at a time to avoid conscription. Women and children would bring food and supplies to their loved ones while they waited out the Home Guard. Resistance became a community effort.²³



In 1864, Lumbee men lying out to avoid labor conscription stole food from the farms of local white people. When hogs belonging to James Barnes, a white man born in Robeson County, went missing that fall, Barnes believed Allen Lowry and Mary Cumbo, Lumbee American Indians, stole them to feed those lying out.²⁴ In December 1864, Barnes was shot. Before he died, he named Henry Berry Lowry, Allen and Mary's son, one of the assailants. This sparked violence between the Barneses and Lowrys and white and American Indian people.²⁵ Henry Lowry and his allies became known as the "Lowry Gang." The outlaws gained a reputation as Robin Hoods, as many locals believed they targeted the wealthy and defended the vulnerable.

African Americans also resisted their fate at Fort Fisher. Some convinced their enslavers to refuse to send them to work on the defenses. They utilized reports of mistreated slaves and runaways in Wilmington and threatened to run away or played on the enslaver's concerns that they might come back too physically damaged to labor on the plantation.²⁶ Those at Fort Fisher resisted in large and small ways. Historians note that enslaved workers frequently worked slowly, broke or hid tools, or played sick to reclaim their time for themselves. Enslaved men at Fort Fisher certainly deployed these tactics on occasion.

Some African Americans escaped. They had two options: return to their families or flee to the U.S. Navy. Enslaved men chose to return home not because they were loyal to their enslavers but because they built strong family and community ties with other enslaved people and wanted to be with their loved ones again. In June 1862, George Nepsey escaped Fort

²³ Adolph L. Dial and David K. Eliades, *The Only Land I Know: A History of Lumbee Indians* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 45-47.

²⁴ Malinda Maynor Lowery, *The Lumbee Indians: An American Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 73.

²⁵ *Id.*, 74.

²⁶ Martinez, *Confederate Slave Impressment*, 64.

Fisher and likely returned to Fayetteville, N.C. The Engineering Corps placed a runaway ad in the paper for his return to the fort.²⁷ Nepsey likely hid in the wilderness to avoid detection but found opportunities to visit with his loved ones frequently.

Other men, like Charles Wesley, rowed a small boat down the Cape Fear River to the Atlantic Ocean and boarded a U.S. Navy ship. Once aboard, Wesley and others were considered “contraband” of war. The U.S. military refused to return escaped enslaved people to their owners or the Confederate government. Wesley was now free.

African Americans that found freedom with the U.S. Navy blockade often provided valuable military intelligence on defenses and troop numbers. Some black men even chose to enlist in the Navy. Wesley and fifty-nine other African Americans escaped the greater Wilmington region during the war and served in the Navy.

The Battles of Fort Fisher

By mid-1863, American forces successfully captured or blockaded all major port cities in the South except for one: Wilmington, N.C.²⁸ U.S. Army commanders floated ideas of attacking Wilmington in early 1864, but major combat operations elsewhere meant the plans were put on hold.

In the fall of 1864, approximately 150 U.S. Navy warships and transport vessels assembled at Hampton Roads, Virginia. General Grant called it the largest fleet ever assembled to date.²⁹



Navy ships depart Hampton Roads for Fort Fisher in December 1864.

²⁷ “Left Fort Fisher,” *Fayetteville Semi-Weekly Observer*, June 23, 1862, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/63686722> (accessed January 16, 2020).

²⁸ Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr. *The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope* (Campbell, CA: Savas Publishing Co., 1997), 51.

²⁹ Fonvielle, *The Wilmington Campaign*, 194.

The armada set sail for Wilmington in mid-December with 6,500 soldiers of the Army of the James. Their first target would be Fort Fisher.

The Confederates in Wilmington prepared for the coming assault. Colonel Lamb recorded in his diary that upon hearing the news of the approaching fleet he “had consultation with Commanders of companies about our defence. Had negroes to work after the news to day.”³⁰ The Confederate war machine was put on full alert to prepare for the attack.

Major General Benjamin Butler, commanding officer of the U.S. Army forces for this attack, concocted an ambitious scheme to blow down the walls of Fort Fisher and stun its garrison into submission. Under Butler’s orders, troops loaded tons of gunpowder onboard an old ship, anchored the ship near Fort Fisher, lit the timed fuses, and quickly paddled back to safety. On December 24, 1864, the powder boat erupted in bright flames and a shock wave rolled across the ocean, but Fort Fisher remained intact with no structural damage. Butler’s experiment failed miserably.

Twelve hours after the explosion, U.S. Navy vessels took their positions and opened the bombardment of Fort Fisher. All day long, the Union fleet pounded Fort Fisher with an unprecedented naval bombardment destroying Colonel Lamb's headquarters, the fort’s barracks, and various outbuildings.³¹ The next day, the Navy resumed its bombardment while U.S. soldiers landed onshore about four miles north of Fort Fisher. After securing their beachhead, American forces moved south to conduct reconnaissance and set up a headquarters within 100 yards of the earthworks. Throughout the day information was gathered on the fortification. The conclusion was the fort is still too strong to be taken with the forces at hand. As the weather worsened, a retreat was called and troops returned to the transport ships. After riding out the storm for two days, the fleet departed the Cape Fear for Hampton Roads, Virginia. Fort Fisher and its garrison had survived the first attack intact.³²

³⁰ Diary of Colonel William Lamb, Sunday December 18, 1864.

³¹ See Rod Gragg, *Confederate Goliath: The Battle of Fort Fisher* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 62-98.

³² *Ibid.*

Three weeks later, the United States forces returned with a new commander and a new plan. The morning of January 13, 1865, the Navy began bombarding the fort while U.S. soldiers landed about 4½ miles north. By that evening, Major General Alfred H. Terry moved south with approximately 9,000 soldiers including 3,000+ U.S. Colored Troops.

On January 14, as Union forces continued to land, a few Confederate reinforcements reached Fort Fisher from surrounding defensive posts. Late that afternoon, U.S. commanders assessed the fort after two days of naval bombardment. The Navy fleet damaged nearly every cannon on the land face. The commanders agreed that the Confederates' defensive ability was sufficiently weakened and the conditions were right for a land assault.

The next day, U.S. infantry soldiers formed into three brigades to attack Shepherd's Battery on the riverside of the fort. To the east, along the ocean, over 2,000 sailors and marines assembled to attack the Northeast Bastion. At about 3:00 the Federal fleet sounded a long blast from their steam whistles signaling the commencement of the U.S. ground attack.

Following the signal, Fleet Captain Kidder R. Breese and his naval troops began the assault on the Northeast Bastion - the corner of the land and sea face along the coastline. The Confederates had amassed a large portion of their troops to defend the Bastion, leaving the western part of the land face vulnerable. As U.S. sailors and marines rushed headlong down the beach to the fort, the Confederates unleashed a devastating fire. The naval contingent tried in vain to breach the fort's defenses to no avail. They were routed and retreated back up the beach. Confederate defenders along the Northeast Bastion cheered wildly. But the celebration quickly evaporated; Colonel Lamb and Major General Whiting saw several large U.S. regimental flags waving over Shepherd's Battery to the west.³³

³³ See Fonvielle, *The Wilmington Campaign*, 207-275.



At 3:25 as the Northeast Bastion attack was underway; Brigadier General N. Martin Curtis commenced the attack on Shepherd's Battery. As Confederate artillery thundered overhead, the First Brigade's soldiers rose from their positions to attack the west edge of the fort. Troops poured through the gaps in the fort's

fence line and begin clambering up the walls of Fort Fisher. Major General Terry quickly called upon the Second Brigade to charge into the fort. Confederate artillery continued to rake the attackers with shell and canister. Driven by sheer weight of numbers, the Federals pour over the crest of Shepherd's Battery. The Confederates, greatly outnumbered, fell back.³⁴

During the peak of combat operations at Fort Fisher, Confederate Major General Robert Hoke marched his troops south towards the action. Hoke commanded soldiers stationed at Sugar Loaf, a defensive line about six miles north of Fort Fisher along the road to Wilmington. Hoke hoped to surround the U.S. forces and change the tide of battle in the South's favor. Over three thousand African American soldiers and eight hundred white soldiers stood in the way. General Terry tasked these men with holding the rear line from a counterattack. Hoke's forces pushed Colonel Abbott's white brigade back; Confederates occupied part of the Union rear. However, the U.S. Colored Troops held steady. They reclaimed the trench line and force Hoke's men to retreat. Without the expertise of the



Soldiers of Company E, 4th USCTs. Their regiment was at Fort Fisher.

³⁴ Id., 270-276.

African American soldiers, the white U.S. Army soldiers would have been surrounded at Fort Fisher.³⁵

The U.S. advance began losing momentum at the fourth traverse. By late afternoon, nearly 4,000 American soldiers crowded the base, slopes, and walls of Shepherd's Battery and were pouring onto the parade ground behind the fort. Confederates mounted a counterattack, but with key Confederate leadership wounded and the overwhelming Union strength, the counterattack failed.³⁶

Exhausted from hours of hand-to-hand combat, the U.S. soldiers again lost momentum by early evening. Senior officers on the front lines debated entrenching their positions and resuming the attack the next day, but Terry orders the men to press onward. He feared other Confederate soldiers from the surrounding defenses would arrive overnight and make the battle even tougher if it continued into the next day. But the three brigades inside Fort Fisher were spent. Terry called for reinforcements. He selected Colonel Abbott's brigade and just one of seven USCT regiments.³⁷

Abbott's men pushed the Confederates further South towards the works on the tip of the peninsula called Battery Buchanan. The 27th US Colored Troops joined the march to Buchanan, ready to fight. The Confederate soldiers were exhausted, outnumbered, and had nowhere left to go. There would be no more fighting. Shouts of triumph from the Federals were clearly audible. As the USCTs became visible from Battery Buchanan, Confederate Major Reilly - at this point the senior officer - knew surrender was the only option.

Major General Alfred Terry was summoned to Buchannan and received the official surrender of Fort Fisher from General Whiting. Terry accepted the fort's large garrison flag, removed from atop the Mound Battery, as a prize of war. By 10:00pm, American troops celebrate the capture of Fort Fisher and the US Navy lit up the night sky with signal rockets to join the celebration.³⁸

³⁵ Id., 276-279; Brigadier General Charles J. Paine Official Report of the Capture of Fort Fisher in United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* Vol. XLVI (Washington: [s.n.], 1894).

³⁶ Fonvielle, *The Wilmington Campaign*, 284-285.

³⁷ Gragg, *Confederate Goliath*, 209-213.

³⁸ Id., 226-229; Fonvielle, *The Wilmington Campaign*, 294-295.

Onwards to Wilmington

With Fort Fisher in hand, the U.S. forces rested and reorganized until the end of January 1865. For the first three weeks of February 1865, combined Navy and Army forces attacked various Confederate defenses along the Cape Fear as they approached ever closer to Wilmington. The two sides fought at Fort Anderson, Sugar Loaf, Town Creek, and Forks Road. White U.S. soldiers defeated the Confederates at Town Creek and Fort Anderson, while primarily black USCTs beat back the Southern troops at Sugar Loaf and Forks Road.³⁹

On February 22, 1865 U.S. Army soldiers marched into Wilmington. Residents had mixed reactions. One local wrote in his diary, "I think this has been one of the saddest days of my life." Another displayed American flags from their balcony. African Americans were overjoyed at the site of the blue uniforms. Their freedom was secured. A USCT soldier later wrote "I noticed an old man and woman, - both seemed to be lame, shouting and giving God the praise, to see this day. They said they had been praying so long, yet thought they should die without the sight, and they thanked God that the day had come when they were not to be driven to market to be sold as sheep. The children shouted and clasped their hands. I was indeed speechless. I could do nothing but cry to look at the poor creatures so overjoyed." As they marched through Wilmington, the USCTs sang "John Brown's Body."⁴⁰

Reconstruction

Black American soldiers occupied Wilmington and surrounding former Confederate posts, like Fort Fisher, from June 1865 until May 1867. Many local whites hated the mere presence of armed African Americans. Before the Civil War, North Carolina courts sanctioned violence against black people who were deemed rude or disrespectful towards whites. Now, white Wilmingtonians were subject to African American authority. After all, the USCTs were tasked with enforcing federal regulations during Reconstruction. At least five altercations between white civilians and the USCTs broke out about as many months.⁴¹ While Wilmington had better race relations than other Southern towns and cities, occupation by black troops revealed deep seeded prejudice.

³⁹ Fonveille, *The Wilmington Campaign*, 331-425.

⁴⁰ Id., 426-428; Quoted in Gragg, *Confederate Goliath*, 245; John W. Pratt to the Editor of the *Christian Recorder*, published in the *Christian Recorder*, March 25, 1865.

⁴¹ Richard M. Reid, *Freedom for Themselves: North Carolina's Black Soldiers in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 282-288.

During the first few months of occupation, U.S. Army leadership seized local plantations and allowed formerly enslaved and poor whites to live and work upon the land for their own benefit.⁴² But the federal government decided against these measures of reparations. Instead, former Confederates and Confederate sympathizers regained their property and political power by swearing an oath of allegiance to the United States.

Former Confederate Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Waddell wrote to North Carolina Governor William Holding in June 1865 to express the displeasure of white citizens being watched over by black troops. “I do assure you that our people of all classes are alarmed, and justly so, at the very threatening aspect of affairs here,” he wrote. “There is no disposition to interfere with the negroes in any way but there is a very strong indisposition not be placed at their mercy...we desire a white garrison if possible.”⁴³

Waddell got his wish a few months later. “Orders have been issued, we are glad to inform our readers, for the removal of the negro troops from this town,” the *Wilmington Herald* reported on November 29, 1865.⁴⁴ The Colored Troops were removed to Fort Fisher and other former Confederate forts in the region and white soldiers took control of Wilmington.

USCTs occupied Fort Fisher and surrounding posts into early 1867. The Army pulled various regiments into the growing Indian Wars in the American West. A few white regiments replaced the black soldiers. Federal occupation of Fort Fisher ended in May 1867 with a military order to abandon the post.

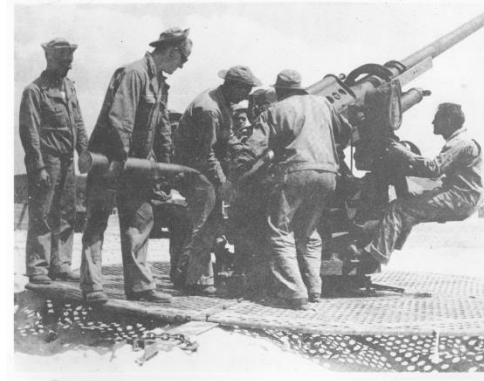
⁴² Fonville, *The Wilmington Campaign*, 456-457

⁴³ A.M. Waddell to Governor William H. Holding, June 18, 1865, William Woods Holden Collection, NC Digital Archives, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p15012coll8/id/14168/> (accessed May 5, 2022).

⁴⁴ “Change of Garrison,” *Wilmington Herald*, November 29, 1865, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/58004760> (accessed May 5, 2022).

World War II at Fort Fisher

With the onset of World War II in Europe, the site once more became an active military post. In late December 1940, nearly one year before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, construction began on a new military facility called Camp Davis at the small town of Holly Ridge, 30 miles north of Wilmington. Because of the training schedule, Camp Davis needed five remote training sites dispersed along North Carolina's southern coast. Fort Fisher became the primary firing outpost for the camp.



Due to the distance from Camp Davis, Fort Fisher needed everything to make it self-sufficient. The base included 48 frame buildings, 316 tent frames, showers and latrines, mess halls, warehouses, radio and meteorological stations, a post exchange, photo lab, recreation



hall, outdoor theater, guardhouse, infirmary, an administration building, as well as a 10,000-gallon water storage tank, a motor pool, a large parade ground, and three steel observation towers along the beach. New firing installations were also constructed along the beach between US 421 and the ocean. They included batteries of 40-millimeter automatic cannons and 50-caliber machine guns. Further south, on Federal Point, an anti-mechanized target range was built to train anti-aircraft gunners to shoot tanks.

The 54th Coast Artillery Regiment was among the first to train at the former Confederate fort. Soldiers arrived in October 1941 for field training exercises. Some local white residents complained about the Black soldiers training in their neck of the woods. The 54th trained at Fort Fisher for about a month before returning to Camp Davis as planned. The discrimination and prejudice they endured from some local whites never detracted from their dedication to their duty. In July 1941, the 54th received approval for a regimental motto: "Per Ardua" or "Through Difficulties."⁴⁵ The Regimental motto exemplified the soldiers' commitment to

⁴⁵ "O.K. Insignia of 54th Coast Artillery Unit," *Chicago Defender*, July 26, 1941.

excellence despite violence and prejudice at the hands of the enemy and their fellow Americans.

The 54th Regiment commenced large scale military training operations in earnest just ten days after they arrived at Camp Davis. The ambitious training for the new regiment - fewer than one hundred soldiers had even been in the Army for more than 2 months - quickly earned praise of civilian and military officials alike.⁴⁶ During their training at Fort Fisher in October and November 1941, white and Black newspapers alike praised the 54th writing for example “The 54th Coast Artillery pump[ed] huge projectiles at targets out in the Atlantic with unerring accuracy.”⁴⁷



Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Army split up the 54th Regiment - the only trained and active coast artillery regiment in the Army. The First and Third Battalions transferred to California to protect the west coast. Soldiers manned their 155mm guns in shifts. They also participated in USO events and inter-service sports leagues. On occasion, they still endured racism from Californians who refused to serve African Americans. However, most locals recognized the protection the soldiers provided and rallied against segregation policies. In 2009, the people of Santa Cruz, California honored the service of the 54th Regiment with a memorial plaque at Lighthouse Point, which was one of their duty stations during the war.

The Second Battalion deployed to the Pacific Theater for the war. They too overcame difficulties. In October 1942, their transport ship ran aground and sank not long after everyone reached the shore. Their transport still held most of their personal affects and military equipment as it drifted to the bottom of the ocean. The Regiment essentially started over with new equipment and therefore new weapons training. In February 1944, the regiment became the first all-Black combat support unit to directly engage the enemy in the

⁴⁶ See, for example, “Race Soldiers Help Run Camp Davis,” *The Carolina Times*, August 23, 1941, <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1941-08-28/ed-1/seq-7/> (accessed January 23, 2022).

⁴⁷ “Fort Fisher Active Again,” *Rocky Mount Telegram*, November 19, 1941, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/375059896> (accessed April 15, 2022).

South Pacific. For the remainder of the war, the Second Battalion conducted about 400 field and coast artillery missions.

The 54th soldiers' commitment to exemplary military service reflects a longer tradition of African Americans in the armed forces. Since the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 which first allowed African Americans to enlist en masse in the U.S. military, some whites doubted their ability to follow orders and withstand combat. Meanwhile, for generations, African American veterans believed their service to the nation proved their worth as citizens and thus justified civil rights. Through difficulties, the 54th Coast Artillery Regiment proved capable as men and soldiers. Veterans of the regiment campaigned for full civil rights in part on the merit of their service and dedication to the nation.

As the United States entered World War II, able-bodied men were drafted, trained, and sent to the European and Pacific Theaters. Women filled jobs traditionally held by men from manufacturing centers to support duties for the military. A paramilitary organization called the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) formed to fly target planes for anti-aircraft artillery training drills. The WASPs arrived at Camp Davis on July 24, 1943. This was their



first assignment beyond airplane ferrying duty. Fifty-two women served at Camp Davis with the US Army Air Force. Two towing squadrons were stationed at Camp Davis Army Airfield. On August 1st, the WASP were put to work piloting A-24 Banshees and A-25 Shrikes and took on the duty of towing targets for Camp Davis's anti-aircraft artillery training. These women pulled targets across the sky for the men to learn how to fire their guns. Planes towing target

sleeves on long cables roared back and forth above the beaches of Fort Fisher and Camp Davis's other firing ranges, while anti-aircraft gunners below propelled streams of shells at the soaring targets. The WASP flew thousands of miles each week, both day and night, in missions along the coast.

By 1944, the need for anti-aircraft training was not required as most of the Axis Air Forces had been destroyed. Many men were transferred to infantry units and the anti-aircraft training was transferred to Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. Training at Fort Fisher would wind

down until the site was closed and many of the facilities were either left behind or removed. By early 1945, Camp Davis was closed as well.

Important FYIs about Field Trip Programming

Museum Construction for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 School Years

As the 2022-2023 school year begins, our historic site will become a major construction zone. We are getting a brand new, much larger museum! Construction may impact our ability to provide certain educational activities. We hope to remain open to the public throughout the bulk of construction. However, we may need to adjust programming on limited notice due to changes in construction safety zones and impacts on our current building and grounds. We will provide you with specific information about any potential impacts due to construction upon booking your field trip and will keep you up to date on any changes as your trip approaches.

New Field Trip Program: What You Should Know

We have revised our school group programs beginning in the 2022-2023 school year to better align with educational themes central to our site and to better match with North Carolina Education Standards.

This new program includes pre- and post-visit lesson plans so you can more easily incorporate Fort Fisher's history into your classroom and prepare students for their field trip. And if you have visited our site before, you'll notice the popular activities on site are preserved. The major change is that our 10-minute introductory film will no longer be shown. The video does not cover the full breadth of our site's history and, we've found, many students prefer more hands-on engagement for a site introduction.

Scheduling a Field Trip

We recommend that your field trip group spend at least 90 minutes to 2 hours on property. This allows ample time for students to participate in multiple staff-guided activities that cover our extensive history. However, we can accommodate a group for as little as forty-five minutes or over two hours with the number and type of programming adjusted to fit your allotted time.

There are currently no fees associated with any field trip programs at Fort Fisher State Historic Site. Donations to the Friends of Fort Fisher - our fundraising society - helps cover the cost of educational activities for field trips and families. Donations are appreciated but in no way required.

Our site is open Tuesday - Saturday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. Please note that we do not have picnic tables or a cafeteria on site. Groups are welcome to eat their own lunch or snack on property so long as they properly dispose of the trash and do not disrupt other visitors.

Our facilities include a large parking lot with space for buses, restrooms, a Civil War and World War II museum with a theater that sits 50 people, and the remains of Fort Fisher along a ¼ mile walking trail.

To schedule your field trip to Fort Fisher State Historic Site, contact Kaitlin O'Connor at kaitlin.oconnor@ncdcr.gov or 910-251-7347 (email preferred). Kaitlin will guide you through your options for your trip and help you select a program that matches with your goals and your students' interests and age level. She will ask for your group leader's contact information (including a day-of phone number), number of students expected, date and time of the trip, and grade level.

Field Trip Program & Lesson Plans

This program teaches students about the importance of Wilmington to the Confederacy and thus to the end of the Civil War. Students will learn about the defenses of Wilmington - primarily Fort Fisher - and the laborers who built them. Students will also learn about the U.S. Navy blockade and Confederate blockade runners, which were called the “lifeline of the Confederacy.” Finally, students will learn about the battles that led to the capture of the final port city in the Confederacy.

Pre-Visit Activities

There are currently two optional pre-visit activities that may fit your classroom’s interests and needs. They are available via our [Google Drive folder](#). The Drive folder contains a teacher’s guide and any resources necessary for that lesson. A QR code and web address are available on the last page of this packet. More lesson plans may be added to the drive later.

1. Wilmington: The Last Port City (40 minutes)

Recommended grade level: 4th grade

This lesson focuses on the geographic and strategic significance of Fort Fisher. Why was the fort built where it was? What did it defend? Why is it significant in North Carolina’s Civil War history? Students will be challenged to decide where they would build a fort in the Lower Cape Fear. Students learn how geography impacts history and North Carolina’s wartime economy.

This lesson includes a slideshow and teacher’s notes to guide educators through instruction. Students work through the slideshow with a worksheet.

2. Through Their Eyes: Fort Fisher Primary Source Analysis (35-45 minutes)

Recommended grade level: middle or high school

Students learn how historians critically evaluate multiple sources and perspectives in order to understand the past. This lesson invites students to put those skills into practice and analyze three primary sources written by witnesses to and participants in the Battle of Fort Fisher. Students should be able to discuss biases, motivations, strengths, and weaknesses of the author and the source at a grade-appropriate level.

Field Trip

Our standard field trip program consists of three activities and takes approximately 1 hour and forty-five minutes. All activities are suitable for groups from fourth grade through high school, with adjustments made to fit the age group. The activities are: Fort Fisher's story, guided tour, and school of the soldier. Groups larger than fifty are divided up to provide sufficient space and attention for all.

Fort Fisher's Story (15 minutes)

Students gather inside our site theater with a Fort Fisher staff historian and think through the experiences of three different people tied to the site's history. Students learn about the lives of a Confederate soldier stationed here, an African American or American Indian laborer compelled to build the fort, and a wife of a soldier. Students are challenged to think about their perspectives, motivations, and experiences and how historians use all these accounts to better understand the past.



Guided Tour (45 minutes)

****Minimum age level: 4th grade****

A staff historian guides students around the historic remains of Fort Fisher while telling stories from our history.

Students have the opportunity to tour the top of Shepherd's Battery - our reproduction gun battery with a cannon and observation deck.

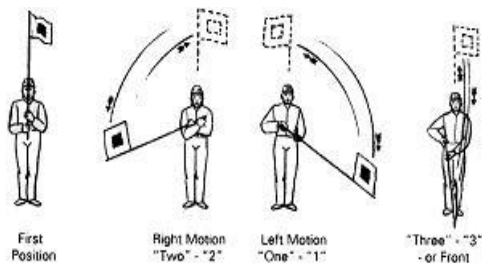
School of the Soldier (20 minutes)

For this station, students watch a live fire demonstration of a reproduction Civil War musket. The Union soldier will discuss their equipment as well as who they are and why they fight. Students will have the opportunity to feel and try on a uniform and ask questions about the weapon, daily life, or motivations of the soldier.



We can customize the field trip based on your time requirements and age group! Our staff will work with you when you call or email to book your reservation.

Additional field trip activities include:



Getting the Message Through: How would Civil War soldiers communicate across distances? From ship to shore? They used signal flags! In this 20-30 minute activity, students use the Wig-Wag alphabet and try to get a message through to their teammates using the coded flag signals.

Townball: Students learn about the nineteenth-century predecessor to baseball. The activity includes a couple of innings of game play. This program lasts about 30 minutes.



Post-Visit Activity: Be the Historian

Now that students have spent at least one day learning about Fort Fisher and the practice of history, it's time to put their historical skills to the test! In "Be the Historian," students break into groups. The group works together to tell Fort Fisher's history utilizing different experiences and perspectives (Confederate private, Union officer, American Indian laborer, etc.).

This activity includes an information packet provided by Fort Fisher that recaps important information students learned in pre-visit and field trip activities. Utilizing the packet and their own memory of the activities, students analyze different sources to "write" the history of Fort Fisher. They work together to answer essential questions like "What do we know happened at Fort Fisher?" or "How might different people thought about the fort and battle?" Older students may even draw connections between Fort Fisher/Civil War history and modern events.

Educators may choose how they wish for their students to present their history report. It can be a traditional essay assignment, class presentation, or a creative assignment like poetry, art, or a skit.

Standards Met

The below charts provide an overview of how our educational activities meet North Carolina Education Standards. On the Google Drive [LINK] with the lesson plans, we have provided a comprehensive list of standards met for each activity.

Fourth Grade			
Standard		Met By	Explanation
4.E.1.1	Explain the ways in which scarcity impacts economic decisions in NC.	Field trip	Staff discuss reliance on foreign trade due to scarcity of manufactured goods.
4.G.1.2	Exemplify the ways in which movement of people, goods and ideas has impacted the development of North Carolina using maps and other geographic tools.	Pre-visit activity	Students explore maps of NC and Southern railroad lines and port cities.
4.G.1.3	Summarize the reasons for forced and voluntary migration to, from, and within NC.	Pre-visit activity	Students study primary and secondary sources about black and American Indian laborers forced to come to fort.
		Field trip	Staff discusses reasons for forced labor at fort.
4.H.1.1 &	Explain how the experiences and achievements of minorities, indigenous groups, and marginalized people have contributed to change and innovation in NC. &	Pre-visit activity	Students study sources on Black and American Indian laborers.
		Field trip	Staff discusses role of non-white laborers, women in

4.H.1.2	Summarize the changing roles of women, indigenous populations and racial groups throughout the history of NC.		the war, and US Colored Troops.
		Post-visit activity	Students read about & reflect on USCTs and non-white laborers.
4.H.1.4	Summarize the role NC has played in major conflicts and events throughout the history of America.	Pre-visit activity	Create a timeline of when other port cities captured/closed. Emphasizes importance of Wilmington in Civil War history.
		Field trip	Students learn about importance of capturing fort to end of war.
		Post-visit activity	Students analyze the role of Fort Fisher in greater NC and Civil War history.
4.H.1.5	Use primary and secondary sources to compare multiple perspectives of various historical events in NC.	Pre-visit activity	Primary and secondary sources provided describe value of Wilmington to CSA and USA.
		Post-visit activity	Students analyze sources from various perspectives to understand and convey the history of Fort Fisher.

EX.4.G.1.5	Use maps to locate places in the classroom.	Pre-visit activity	Students read maps with CSA defenses and supply lines.
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Fifth Grade			
Standard		Met By	Explanation
5.E.1.3	Explain the impact of production, specialization, technology, and division of labor on the economic growth of the United States.	Pre-visit activity	Students learn about the centrality of slavery to the Southern economy and how that limited the South's ability to produce weapons of war and thus relied on trade during the war.
		Field trip	Staff discusses the economic implications of slavery and trade to the South at the start of the war.
5.E.1.4	Summarize the role of trade between the United States and other countries.	Pre-visit & Field trip	Students learn about trade between the Confederacy and other nations during the Civil War.
5.G.1.1	Explain the relationship between location, physical environment, and human activity in the United States	Pre-visit	Students explore the geographic and environmental reasons for Fort Fisher's location.

5.G.1.2	Explain ways in which voluntary and forced migration and slavery led to changes in the landscape of the US, using maps.	Pre-visit	Students review primary and secondary sources about forced labor at the fort.
		Field trip	Students learn more about the personal experiences of forced labor and how they contributed to the construction of the fort.
5.G.1.4	Explain the reasons for forced and voluntary migration to, from, and within the United States	Pre-visit activity	Students study primary and secondary sources about Black and American Indian laborers forced to come to fort.
		Field trip	Staff discusses reasons for forced labor at fort.
5.H.1.1	Explain how the experiences and achievements of women, minorities, indigenous groups, and marginalized people have contributed to change and innovation in the U.S.	Pre-visit activity	Students study sources on African American and American Indian laborers.
		Field trip	Staff discusses role of non-white laborers, women in the war, and US Colored Troops.

		Post-visit activity	Students read about & reflect on USCTs and non-white laborers.
5.H.1.5	Compare multiple perspectives of various historical events using primary and secondary sources	Field trip	Students learn about the events of the fort and the battles from various perspectives.
		Post-visit activity	Students review the history of the battle from various perspectives.

Eighth Grade			
Standard		Met By	Explanation
8.B.1.1	Determine how the relationship between different regional, social, ethnic, and racial groups have contributed to the development of North Carolina and the nation.	Pre-visit activities	In each activity, students explore perspectives from various racial, gender, and ethnic groups and their respective contributions to Fort Fisher's history.
		Field trip	
		Post-visit activity	
8.C&G.1.5	Compare access to democratic rights and freedoms of various indigenous, religious, racial, gender, ability and identity groups in North Carolina and the nation.	Pre-visit activities	Students learn about slavery and oppression of free Black and Indigenous Americans.
		Field trip	
		Post-visit activity	

8.C&G.2.1	Summarize the strategies and societal reforms used to address discrimination and oppression in North Carolina and the nation.	Pre-visit activity	Students learn about the legacies and repercussions of slavey and the Civil War, including efforts by the formerly enslaved to secure their civil rights.
		Field trip	During the guided tour, students briefly learn about Union occupation, Reconstruction, and the initial efforts to provide rights and security for the formerly enslaved.
		Pre-visit activities	In each activity, students explore the centrality of slavery to North Carolina’s economy before and during the Civil War.
		Field trip	
		Post-visit activity	
8.G.1.2	Explain how location, resources, and human geography have influenced the development of North Carolina and the nation.	Field trip	Students explore how Confederate engineers utilized the geography of the Wilmington region to create forts and defenses to protect the port city.

8.H.1.1	Explain the causes and effects of conflict in North Carolina and the nation.	Pre-visit activity	In each lesson, students explore the political, economic, and cultural reasons for the Civil War.
		Field trip	Further, students explore the causes and effect of conflict within Confederate North Carolina between enslavers, Confederate engineers, and American Indians with resistance to labor impressment and the Lowry War.
		Post-visit activity	
8.H.2.3	Explain how the experiences and achievements of women, minorities, indigenous, and marginalized groups have contributed to the development of North Carolina and the nation over time.	Pre-visit activity	Students study sources on free and enslaved African American and American Indian laborers.
		Field trip	Staff discusses role of non-white laborers, women in the war, and US Colored Troops.
		Post-visit activity	Students read about & reflect on USCTs and non-white laborers.

Stand Alone Lesson Plans

Fort Fisher State Historic Site also provides numerous additional lesson plans suitable for various grade levels. These educational activities do not directly prepare for or help students analyze their field trip to Fort Fisher. Rather, they explore math, science, literature, and even music through Civil War and World War II history.

These lesson plans are available for download on our Google Drive. Examples include, but are not limited to:



The Rubber Ducky Blockade Runner: During the Civil War, the Confederate government mandated at least fifty-percent of cargo space on trade vessels needed to hold military goods. Ship captains wanted to maximize profit by carrying civilian goods they could sell at a premium price. In this Tetris-inspired activity, students will arrange their cargo hold to comply with the law and maximize profit. The lesson incorporates logic and critical thinking skills with history.

Cypher Disks & Encryption: Women and men served as Confederate and Union spies during the war. Some created their own cipher codes and alphabets while others relied on age-old methods of cipher disks. Students will learn about espionage and coding as they cipher and de-cipher cryptic messages.



Civil War Music - Lesson from the American Battlefield Trust: Civil War era music conveyed the hopes, aspirations, frustrations, and fears of its people. In this lesson, students closely examine the lyrics and melodies of popular mid-nineteenth century songs to analyze their messages. Students then work together to create their own poem or song about the Civil War.

Additional lesson plans and resources are added to our Google Drive page on a regular basis!

Fort Fisher State Historic Site Group Reservation Guidelines

- Groups should remain on the bus or wait outside the visitor center while the group leader checks in with site staff.
- Please let us know if your group is running late. We ask that you please call the Historic Site at 910-251-7340 for the Front Desk and let someone know just how late you may be.
- If your group does not show up after 30 minutes, your tour will be considered canceled.
- Groups with reservations take priority over drop-in groups.
- Reservations are made on a “first come-first served” basis (i.e. it is best to make your reservation early).
- Guided tours can accommodate as many as 50 individuals, but ideally would consist of no more than 40 people.
- Our theater seats no more than 55 people.
- Our gift shop only allows 7 people with a chaperone in at a time.
- At least 1 adult accompany every 10 children and chaperones/adult leaders must remain with the group they are supervising, including stationing chaperones in restrooms and following the group on the guided tour.
- We do not allow beach access at Fort Fisher State Historic Site. For beach access please use the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area (910-458-5798), .25 miles south.
- Picnicking is allowed; however we do not have facilities (tables, covered areas, etc.).
- Do NOT climb on the rocks.
- NO swimming.
- Beware of fire ants and wild animals on the property.
- Please try to schedule enough time for your visit. Especially with large groups, please allow time for loading/unloading buses, visits to restrooms, and switching between activities.

In-Classroom Field Trips

Wilmington Area Outreach Programs



If you can't make it to Fort Fisher, maybe we can help to bring Fort Fisher to you! Our off-site programming activities and presentations are created to meet your needs from the general to the specific.

We would enjoy visiting your classroom in person.

Unfortunately, the farther away from Fort Fisher you are the harder it becomes to conduct many outreach programs. For this reason, we only visit classrooms or

youth programs in Wilmington, Carolina Beach, or Kure Beach.

Our “live” off-site programming may include a presentation on a historical topic and/or educational activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, life in the Civil War, Townball (1860s baseball) field day activity, Civil War espionage, and woman at war.

Virtual Field Trips

We understand not everybody will be able to make the trip down to Kure Beach to visit us! Beginning in January 2023, we plan to offer virtual field trips. Our plan is to offer a World War II virtual field trip that will focus on the stories and legacies of soldiers in the 54th Coast Artillery Regiment, an all-Black unit that trained at Fort Fisher in 1941, and the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), who flew target planes for the anti-aircraft artillery soldiers. The field trip will examine issues of race, gender, discrimination, and persistence in the 1940s. More information on this virtual field trip will be made available on our Google Drive folder in Fall 2022.

Don't forget to access our lesson plans on our Google Drive!



https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1osPohRz96gXc7c_84Lj7RMZHvazQVSdY?usp=sharing

To reserve your field trip, please contact:

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Fort Fisher State Historic Site
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