

The
Living History
 CLASSROOM
 A PUBLICATION OF
 TRYON PALACE Spring 2012

“The Battle of Newbern, N.C., March 14th, 1862,” color lithograph, Currier and Ives, 1862. Tryon Palace Collection.

Life During Wartime

LIFE DURING WARTIME

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Wars create devastation in the form of destroyed homes, businesses, and churches. In wartime, daily life is disrupted; food, medicine, even water can be in short supply. **Civilians**, residents caught in the middle, are often injured or killed during an act of war.

War can divide families and friends. As you will read in this issue, members of one prominent New Bern family chose to take different sides during the Civil War. Edward Stanly, son of U.S. Congressman and State Senator John S. Stanly, served as Military Governor of North Carolina, although two of his five brothers supported the Confederacy. Stanly’s nephew, Lewis Armistead, died during the Battle of Gettysburg, fighting for the Confederate Army, but some of his closest friends fought for the Union on that same battlefield.

War can mean staying in one place and waiting a long time for things to happen. When the U.S. Army occupied New Bern, North Carolina, during the Civil War, it created a network of small forts and encampments surrounding the town and along the Neuse River. There, soldiers waited, sometimes for months, to defend the town from Confederate attack or to be sent to other

battlefields. We will read about one man from Massachusetts, Private Alfred Finney, who did just that, and see images of camp life Sergeant Fred W. Smith, Jr. drew while he was stationed at New Bern between 1862 and 1863.

On the other hand, there were those for whom war was heaven itself. Thousands of African Americans, referred to as “contrabands,” fled the plantations where they were enslaved, escaping to Union-occupied New Bern, where they could live as free people for the first time in their lives. The Army built a large settlement near the Trent River’s south bank for the contrabands, and we’ll read about what their “moving day” to James City might have been like.

In this issue, you will meet...Alfred Finney... Mary Jane and Sylvia Conner...Lewis Armistead...and happy new residents of James City. We don’t know that the descriptions of what Union encampment soldiers endured will make you itchy, or cold. We don’t know that describing what little people had to eat during the war and New Bern occupation will make you hungry. But when you finish this issue, you will be closer to understanding what life was like during wartime for New Bern’s citizens and soldiers alike.

A Note to Teachers

In each issue of *The Living History Classroom*, teachers will find articles, short stories, puzzles, and activities planned to help students explore North Carolina history and culture while utilizing observational and critical thinking, research, and discussion skills. This issue has been designed with the 4th-grade classroom in mind but may also assist parents at home or teachers of other grade levels. Listed below is a guide to show how each article and activity can align with the current 4th-grade North Carolina Standard Course of Study. To help you prepare, we also included the new standards that go into effect for the 2012-2013 school year. The exact goals met will vary based on how you choose to use the issue (e.g., group study, Internet research, writing essays).

Battle of New Bern

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 2.04, 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.03, 1.05, 2.01, 2.04, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

Civil War Food

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.05, 2.01, 2.04, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4, 4.E.2.2
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 2, 3, 4
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

A Soldier's Short Adventure

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.03, 1.05, 2.01, 2.04, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

The Great Divide

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.03, 1.05, 2.01, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4



"Negro Huts at Trent River Settlement," *Harper's Weekly*, 1866. Tryon Palace Collection.

CCSS, 2010 ELA:

Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 4
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

African American Women in Wartime New Bern

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 2.04, 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.03, 1.05, 2.01, 2.04, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 3, 4
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

"Moving Day"

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 2.04, 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.05, 2.01, 2.04, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01, 3.05
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 5
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

A Drummer's Life for Me?

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 3.01, 3.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 1.05, 2.01, 2.04, 2.05, 2.06, 3.01
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.H.1, 4.H.1.3, 4.H.1.4, 4.E.2.2
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1, 2, 4
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8
 Foundational Skills: 4.a, 4.c
 Language Standards: 4.a, 4.c

Make a Sewing Kit

NCSCOS, 2006 SS: 5.02
 NCSCOS, 2004 ELA: 2.05, 2.04, 2.03
 Essential Standards, 2010 SS: 4.E.1.2, 4.C.1.2
 CCSS, 2010 ELA:
 Reading Standards for Literature: 1
 Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1, 2, 7

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The Living History Classroom, made possible through a generous grant by the Tryon Palace Council of Friends, is published twice each school year by Tryon Palace, and is available free of charge to schools and teachers. Our articles, crafts, and games celebrate the resources of Tryon Palace and its North Carolina History Center, as well as New Bern and eastern North Carolina.

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Battle of New Bern

March 13, 2012 marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of New Bern and the town's **occupation** by Union soldiers from March 1862 until the Civil War's end in 1865. This war, the most devastating fought on American soil, began over the struggle to end slavery, in the face of the Southern states' demands to let their own state governments resolve slavery as they individually chose. The war's physical destruction took decades to undo and, although slavery officially ended with the **Emancipation Proclamation**, the issues leading to the war continue to affect our nation today.

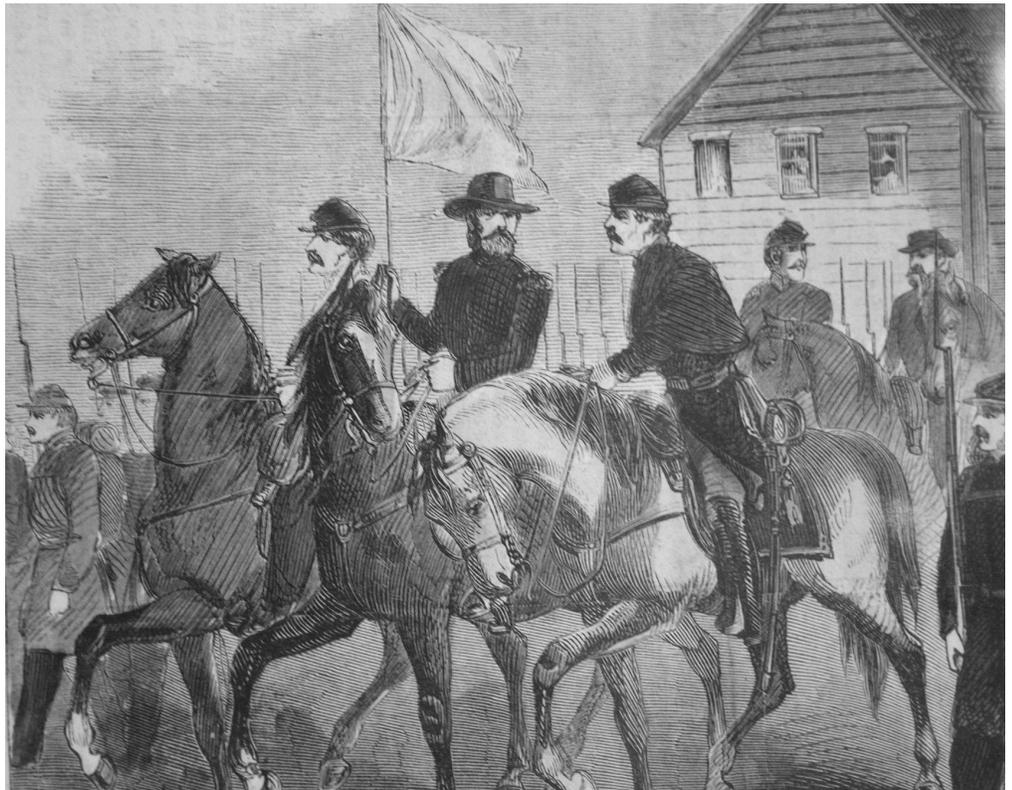
North Carolina **seceded** from the United States on May 20, 1861, joining her fellow Confederate states of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. Four border states never formally left the Union: Maryland, Missouri, Delaware, and Kentucky, although Maryland and Kentucky provided some troops to the Confederacy. To win the war, the Federal government realized that taking over towns and ports along the southeastern coast would block Confederate shipping and trade to markets and factories in Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; and Birmingham, Alabama. New Bern, North Carolina's second-largest town, standing where the Neuse and Trent rivers meet, was one of the key ports and regional hubs that the United States decided should be overtaken. Some New Bern residents were worried about invasion months before the Northern soldiers showed up, but others were less concerned, so the town's surrounding fortifications were not what they should have been by the time the "Yankees" came to town.

Brigadier General Ambrose Burnside, who set out in late 1861 to deliver North Carolina's coast into Union hands, captured Roanoke Island on February 8, 1862, then Winton, on the Chowan River, on February 20. With North Carolina's northeastern coast secured, Burnside and his 11,000 soldiers sailed into the Neuse River from

Pamlico Sound on March 12, 1862.

On the morning of March 13, Burnside's fleet, including thirteen gunboats from the Hatteras encampment, anchored at Slocum's Creek south of New Bern and, after some shelling along the shoreline, jumped off their boats into the Neuse and started the trek to town. Burnside's aide recalled:

*No sooner did [Burnside's steamboat, the Alice Price] touch, than the **color bearer** of the 51st New York [Regiment] leaped overboard waist deep, rushed to the Shore and was the first to plant the Star Spangled Banner on the Soil of North Carolina. . . . thousands followed and the river was full of them—wading waist-deep to shore.¹*



Union soldiers riding into New Bern, March 1862, from *Harper's Weekly*, 1862. Tryon Palace Collection.

The actual battle for New Bern lasted less than four hours, as the experienced Union soldiers dramatically outnumbered the 4,000 Confederate troops, few of whom had ever fought before. Confederate General Lawrence O'Bryan Branch ordered his troops, and whoever else he could find, to set up **entrenchments** along the Neuse River and near the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad line, but the defenses

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Civil War Food



“By the Camp Fire,”
pencil sketch by Fred W.
Smith, New Bern, North
Carolina, c.1862-1863.
Tryon Palace Collection.

When you’re fighting a war, or living through one, the food on hand isn’t always what you’d normally eat or want to eat. Quite a few soldiers in New Bern would have drooled if they’d overheard Private Henry Clapp of the 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia describe the meal he had at Mrs. Tripp’s boardinghouse:

When things were ready we were all seated round her small table and with no elbow room, but much appetite partook of a stunning ham, boiled

*“Everything is very high here—
Flour 9 cents. . . my cook says
it is mixed with rye, beans, and
everything else ground up.”*

*sweet potatoes, tea,
coffee, and oysters and
tripe. The oysters were
cooked without milk,
but were very good.
The affair was very
enjoyable.*

Most soldiers, whether Yankees or Rebels, were not feasting upon a “stunning ham” during the Civil War. A Union soldier’s typical daily **food**

ration was a tough cracker-like biscuit known as **hardtack**, dried meat (more akin to today’s beef jerky than ham), and coffee whenever possible. Hardtack was made by mixing one part water to six parts flour (sometimes adding salt), then rolling out the dough and poking holes in it, much like we see today on saltine crackers. Once rolled and pierced, the dough was baked for about a half-hour, emerging as the food that kept Union soldiers on their feet. If they were lucky, the hardtack hadn’t turned moldy or become a home for bugs or maggots by the time they got to eat it.

Confederate soldiers lacked the more organized system the Union Army had of cooks and **sutlers**, who followed the armies and sold them supplies, so they lived on much less rationed food. One of their staples was johnny cake made from rice or corn flour, mixed with water, and cooked over a campfire. Otherwise, like their counterparts in blue, “Johnny Rebs” relied on whatever could be sent from home,

found in the woods, or taken from a farmer. One special bread Confederate soldiers' wives and mothers sent in care packages was **sagamite**, which was made from brown sugar and cornmeal.

New Bern's citizen population, as virtual prisoners of the Union Army, had to deal with limited supplies of food, high costs, and unexpected ingredients. One resident, writing to a friend, stated: "Everything is very high here—Flour 9 cents. . . my cook says it is mixed with rye, beans, and everything else ground up." Because coffee became nearly impossible to get, some people started roasting and brewing acorns as a substitute!

A Union soldier's typical daily food ration was a tough cracker-like biscuit known as hardtack, dried meat (more akin to today's beef jerky than ham), and coffee whenever possible.

Although they also missed regular coffee, ham, and other treats, farmers and townspeople who had escaped to the countryside fared a little better food-wise, if they were well away from military encampments. Describing an 1864 Christmas Day dinner, Mrs. F. C. Roberts, who lived in Franklin County, North Carolina, for much of the war, wrote of a dinner that hungry "Newbernians" and soldiers alike would envy:

Our ground-pea {peanut} patch had yielded well, and we had laid by late apples from our orchard, we had sorghum for candy and cakes. I had bartered a little salt for a dozen eggs.... Our dinner was frugal. It consisted of rice and peas in many forms with a desert of delicious cake, wine, ground-peas, and apples.

So the next time you open your lunch box, imagine you're a Civil War soldier: your ham and cheese sandwich is hardtack and old beef jerky, your raisins are actually berries, and your drink is brewed from acorns. Happy eating!



"Daily Rations," pencil sketch by Fred W. Smith, New Bern, North Carolina, c. 1862-1863. Tryon Palace Collection.



From this sketch by Fred Smith, we see that all sorts of food could accompany basic rations. Tryon Palace Collection.

A Soldier's Short Adventure: Private Alfred C. Finney at Fort Peirson

Many things caused a man to join the Union or Confederate army during the Civil War. Some men felt that the United States ought to remain united, so they fought to preserve the country. Others felt that by becoming a soldier they were protecting their homes, families, and way of life. Still others believed that each state should be allowed to govern itself. Maybe Alfred Finney enlisted for one of these reasons, or perhaps as a 21-year-old baker, Finney simply craved a little adventure. After all, military service often required travel, so joining the army provided an opportunity to visit new places and see new things.

In October 1862, one and a half years after the first shots of the Civil War were fired, Alfred C. Finney of Plymouth, Massachusetts, volunteered for service in the Union Army. From what we know, thanks to census records, Finney had never lived outside of Massachusetts before he joined the infantry. He was born in 1841 at Charlestown, a small town north of Boston. Alfred's family included two brothers, a sister, and his parents. His father worked as a grocer, while, like many boys his age, Alfred attended school. By the 1850s, Finney's family had moved to Plymouth, Massachusetts, where his father became a baker – a trade that Alfred and his brother Charles learned as teenagers.

Fort Peirson, near New Bern, North Carolina, color lithograph by Samuel J. F. Thayer, 1863. *Tryon Palace Collection.*

By the time Alfred Finney became a soldier, his **regiment**, the 5th Massachusetts, was preparing for service in North Carolina. The regiment was commanded to go to New Bern in order to help ensure that the city and other parts of eastern North Carolina remained in Union hands. Finney and his fellow soldiers left for New Bern early on the morning of October 22nd. Although all of the men were packed and waiting in line, the regiment left three hours behind schedule because the train was late – just long enough for twenty-five soldiers to get “cold feet” and leave! Maybe these men thought a bit more about the demands of being a soldier and realized that it might involve more than traveling to interesting places. Finney, though, stayed with his regiment. Once on the train, the 5th Massachusetts traveled to Boston where the regiment boarded the **steamer** *Mississippi*. It took five days to travel from Boston to North Carolina, where the troops finally landed. What would you do if you had to stay on a ship for five days? These men danced, sang, and played music to pass the time. But they also had to work: some men washed the deck, while others cooked meals for their fellow soldiers.

We know that Finney and the other soldiers found their new home mostly comfortable. Another Massachusetts regiment that was

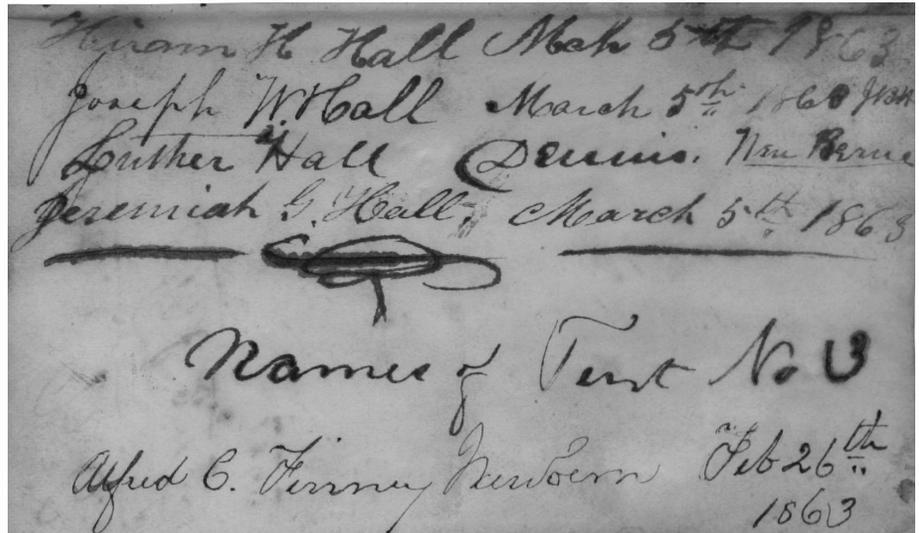


already camped near New Bern pitched tents for the 5th Massachusetts. The tents—called Sibley Tents after their inventor, Henry H. Sibley—were shaped like a teepee and could shelter as many as twelve soldiers. This tent camp was later named Fort Peirson after Colonel George H. Peirson, who was in charge of the 5th Massachusetts regiment.

Fort Peirson was located about one mile outside of New Bern's 1862 city limits—just north of present-day Cedar Grove Cemetery. Though a mile may seem far, Fort Peirson was very close to two other forts. Fort Rowan lay a short distance to the northeast, and Fort Totten was located to the southwest. In fact, Finney would have been able to see Fort Rowan's flag flying above the trees in the distance.

Unfortunately, a swamp “covered with a green slime” stood near Fort Peirson's entrance. Despite the bugs, mosquitoes, and swampy ground, Finney and the other soldiers tried to improve their new home whenever they had time. For instance, they raised their tents above the ground, which helped make them more comfortable. Aside from keeping the tents dry during wet weather, improvements gave the soldiers something to do since boredom was a common complaint. Because Finney and other soldiers were not fighting battles and because the 5th Massachusetts marched in only a few expeditions, their work was dull. While in camp, the soldiers' responsibilities included changing the guard in the morning, drill practice in the afternoon, and dress parade, which included a roll call and the reading of any new orders. One soldier later wrote that a lot of the “boys learned to play simple games of cards to pass away the time.” Soldiers also tried to get regular passes granting permission to go into town or to visit one of the other forts. Perhaps Finney mailed letters, purchased treats, or visited friends in New Bern.

Was being a soldier as exciting as Finney had thought it would be? Unfortunately, we don't know because none of his letters home are known to have survived.



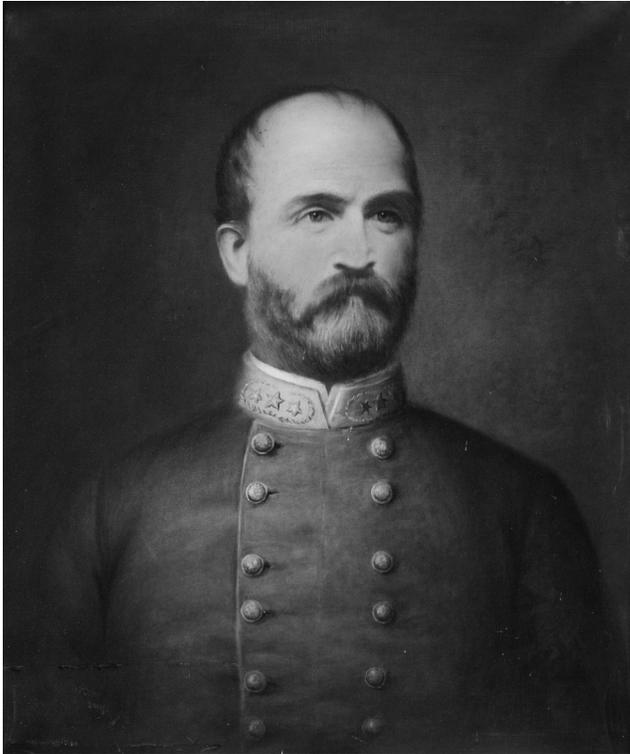
Thanks to their attention to good sanitary practices at their fort, the 5th Massachusetts claimed a small death rate when compared to other regiments. Sadly, though, Finney's adventures ended here. On March 13th, 1863, less than seven months into his life as a soldier, Alfred C. Finney died of a “congestive chill” at Academy General Hospital in New Bern. Although he ate the same foods, slept in the same tents, and completed the same tasks as others, Finney caught some sort of illness that others did not. What caused the “chill” that led to his death? Was it the typhoid fever that killed another sergeant in the regiment just months before? Or could it have been the spinal meningitis that caused twenty-seven deaths in New Bern between December 1862 and March 1863?

Whatever the cause, Finney met the same fate of many Civil War soldiers who did not die on the battlefield, but who, living in close contact with other men, without understanding how diseases spread, died on an army cot in a hospital. He was one of sixteen men from his regiment to die. As for the rest of his regiment, those who were at Fort Peirson packed their knapsacks and left New Bern on June 22, 1863, after nine months of service. They were sent from North Carolina with the thanks and applause of two other Massachusetts regiments, and arrived in their home state to a solemn ceremony and a feast. From there, the men of the 5th Massachusetts Voluntary Infantry returned to their homes and the jobs they held before their wartime service.

Alfred Finney's New Testament Bible was signed by fourteen of his fellow regiment soldiers in February 1863. *Tryon Palace Collection.*

The Great Divide

What would you do... if your state chose to join one side of a war, but your friends and family supported the other side? What would you do... if your brother and your best friend joined two different, opposing armies? **Lewis Addison Armistead** (1817-1863) was one of many Southerners who faced this situation when the Civil War began.



Portrait of Lewis Addison Armistead. *Image courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.*

Lewis A. Armistead was born at his mother's childhood home in New Bern, North Carolina, on February 18, 1817. He was named for two uncles who both died fighting the British in the **War of 1812**. His own father, Walker Keith Armistead, had also served in the War of 1812. His mother, Elizabeth, was the daughter of the well-known North Carolinian lawyer and politician, John Stanly. Lewis

and his brothers and sisters spent their childhood in Virginia where his father had grown up, and frequently visited their New Bern relatives.¹

When Lewis was 17 years old, he left Virginia to attend military school at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY. School was not easy for Lewis. He suffered from a lingering illness during his first year, and fell behind in his Math and French classes. Lewis also had a quick and explosive temper. One day while on the parade grounds, Jubal Early, a classmate and future Confederate general, insulted Lewis in front of everyone. Lewis decided to get even in the mess hall by breaking a plate over Jubal's head. After the plate incident, Lewis resigned from **West Point**, probably at the school's request.

Though he did not graduate from West Point, Lewis was able to find a good position in the U.S. Army, thanks to his father's military position and the help of his New Bern uncle, Edward Stanly who was a U.S. Congressman. In a letter to the Secretary of War, Edward convinced the Secretary of Lewis's abilities and his eagerness to join the service. As a result, Lewis joined the Army in 1839. Lewis's first experience of war was during Florida's **Second Seminole War**, when he served under his own father, as well as under future president General Zachary Taylor. During the Seminole War, Lewis proved that he was a good soldier. A few years later, he further proved his bravery and skill in the **Mexican-American War**. After that war, Lewis continued to serve on the Western frontier, which included the future states of California, New Mexico, and Arizona.

In 1861, Lewis was stationed in California with one of his best friends, Winfield Scott Hancock, whom he had met at West Point and served with during the Mexican-American



Major General Winfield S. Hancock, Campbell Photo Service, Washington, D.C., c. 1861-1865. *Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Civil War Photographs.*

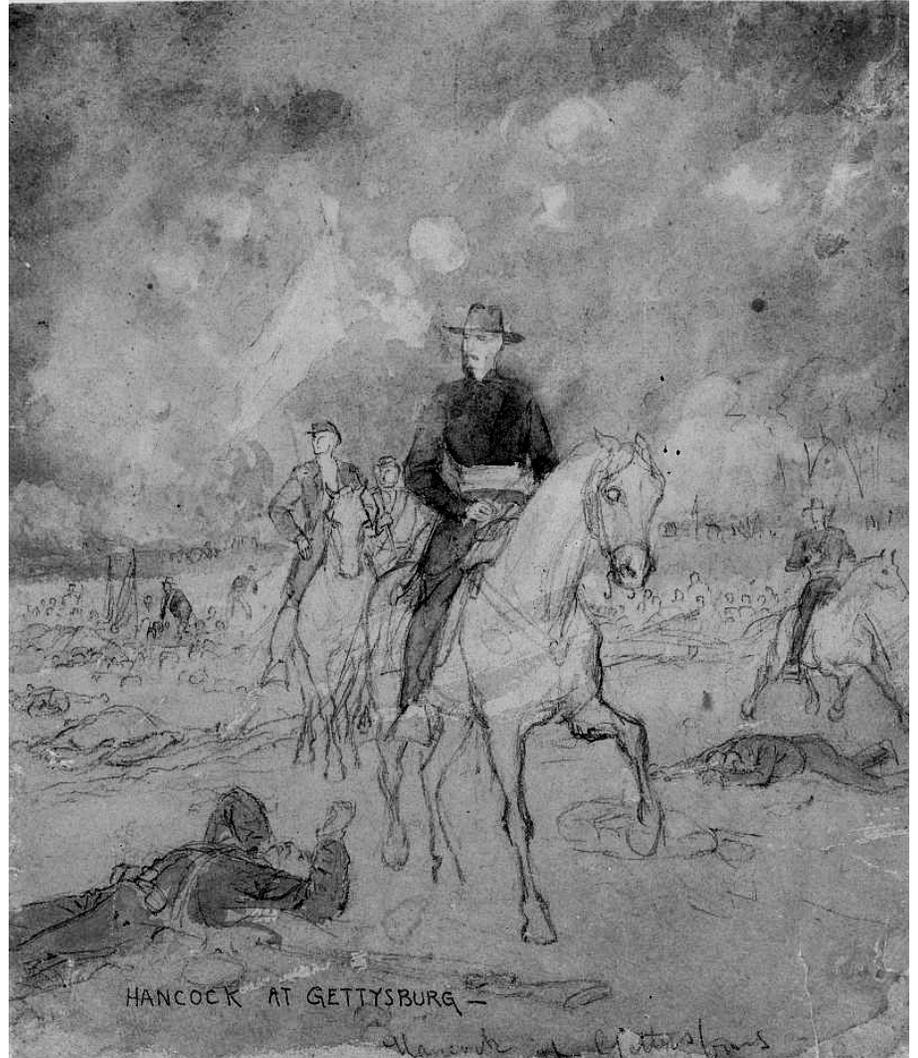
War. However, everything changed that year when Lewis's home state of Virginia **seceded** from the Union. Lewis decided, as did many other Southern soldiers, to resign from the Union and join the **Confederate Army**. Winfield, on the other hand, was from a Northern state and remained with the **Union Army**.

The quandary of choosing sides extended beyond Lewis Armistead's friends to his family circle. Both Armisteads and Stanlys had to decide where their loyalties lay. Lewis's brothers chose to support their home state and join the **Confederacy**. The Stanly uncles, however, chose different sides: three uncles joined the Union and two the Confederacy.

From 1861 until April 1865, brothers, cousins, and friends who chose their sides, whether North or South, took the chance that they would meet again on opposite sides of a battlefield.

Soon after Lewis decided to resign from the Union Army, he met with Winfield and several other friends at a farewell party hosted by Winfield and his wife. The evening proved to be a somber time as friends said goodbye. They knew that their individual decisions could cost them the friendships they held so dear. Lewis was particularly sad and gave Winfield's wife a small satchel of his belongings to keep safe and to give to his family in case he was killed.

Two years after their farewell dinner, Lewis and Winfield met again as generals, on opposing sides, near **Gettysburg**, Pennsylvania. On the Battle of Gettysburg's final day, Lewis and his brigade formed part of **Pickett's Charge**. He was tasked to lead his men to the center of the Union line, where Winfield was one of the defending generals. Lewis and his men made it farther than any other brigade in the charge before they were halted by Union forces. Lewis was wounded and captured. He asked



to be taken to his friend Winfield's tent but Winfield had also been wounded during the battle. Lewis was instead taken to a Union hospital to be treated for his injuries. Winfield survived his wounds but, sadly, Lewis died before he could see his friend. Three other friends who had been at the farewell dinner hosted by Winfield in California were also killed on that fateful day at Gettysburg.

This is one of many tragic stories that happened over the course of the Civil War. From 1861 until April 1865, brothers, cousins, and friends who chose their sides, whether North or South, took the chance that they would meet again on opposite sides of a battlefield.

¹The Stanly House, where Lewis Armistead's grandparents lived, is now part of the Tryon Palace historic site.

Major General Winfield Scott Hancock at Gettysburg, pencil and watercolor sketch by Alfred R. Waud, July 1863. *Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Civil War Photographs.*

African American Women in Wartime New Bern

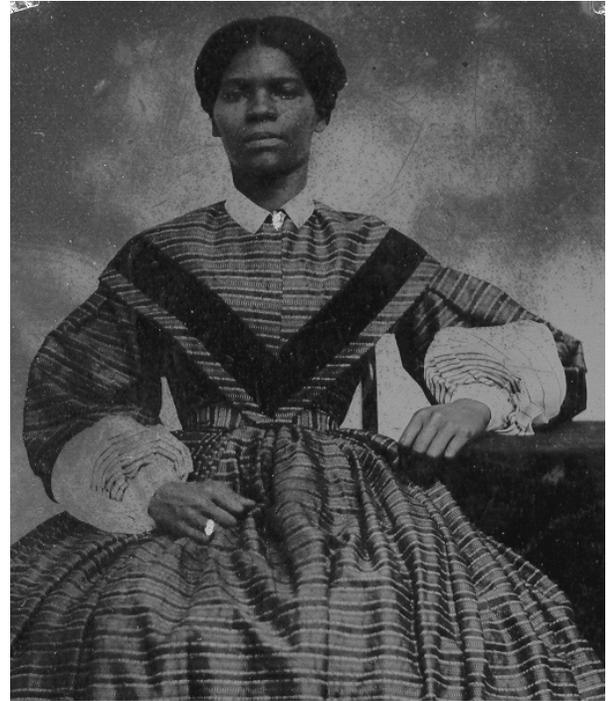
During the Civil War, thousands of slaves escaped from their farms and plantations to New Bern which, because it was occupied by the U.S. Army, was a “free zone.” Once there, the Union’s military government protected nearly all of these **contraband** refugees from being returned to their former enslavers. Before the war, New Bern already had many free blacks who were carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, barbers, and sailors, so it is likely that slaves in eastern North Carolina had always seen New Bern as a place of opportunity.

With the military offering jobs, many African American women who had been born as slaves thrived here. Armies, after all, have to eat. Furthermore, army uniforms need mending and cleaning, and the lucky soldiers who got to live in barracks or houses in town didn’t always have time to clean up after themselves. So cooks, housekeepers, laundresses, seamstresses, and cleaners were welcomed and given employment.

One of these workers was Lucy Berington, a 45-year-old African American who worked as a “wash-woman” for New Bern’s Naval Hospital. Because it was easier for their payroll, the U.S. Navy enlisted her as a “first-class boy,” rather than directly hiring her. A first-class boy was one of the Navy’s entry-level jobs, and its pay scale was approximately seven to nine dollars a month. This would have seemed like a lot of money to Lucy, who was probably a slave before she escaped to New Bern. Lucy is the only enlisted black female we know of in Civil War-era New Bern, but there were probably others.¹

Women who could cook found steady work providing meals for hungry, well-off soldiers. Some prepared meals where the soldiers were stationed, but others fed customers from their own homes, plus offered rooms for rent.

Tintype photograph of “Mary Jane Conner, Cook and Boardinghouse Keeper,” June 1863. *Tryon Palace Collection.*



Tintype photograph of “Sylvia, Seamstress of New Berne,” Mary Jane Conner’s sister-in-law, June 1863. *Tryon Palace Collection.*

We don’t know Mrs. Tripp’s first name, but we do know that many Union soldiers, particularly Private Henry Clapp with the 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, enjoyed her cooking, and arranged to be at her house for special meals. Clapp later boarded at Mrs. Tripp’s home in downtown New Bern when he worked as a census taker for the Army. Another highly-regarded African American cook was Mary Jane Conner, who as a slave had been hired out by her owner to cook at New Bern’s Washington Hotel. Most, if not all, of what money Mary Jane made went straight to her owner. When the Union Army took over the town and the Washington Hotel burned, Mary Jane was free to start her own business, which included cooking for the Army and boarding soldiers at her house.

Sewing was another skill contraband women turned to ready profit. Sylvia Conner, Mary Jane Conner’s sister-in-law, had lived in New Bern before the war as a servant to a wealthy family. Clapp sang her praises, as likely did other pleased customers, “She is a superb seamstress, as my dress-coat just rescued from many rents will bear happy witness.”

Yet, in spite of new opportunities, other former

slaves chose to remain servants for longtime New Bern families. We don't know Charlotte's last name, but we know that she worked as a cook and housekeeper for James Cole's family. One daughter, Lavinia Cole Roberts, remembered Charlotte often going beyond her duties to make sure the family had food. In gratitude, the Cole family made sure Charlotte was provided for after the war.

Thanks to Private Clapp's published letters, we know a good deal about Mary Jane Conner and Sylvia Conner. Furthermore, Tryon Palace also has **tintypes** of them both. Clapp's mother, in appreciation of how Mary Jane and Sylvia had helped her son, sent clothes to them. Shortly after receiving their presents, the Conner women had their pictures taken at one of New Bern's tintype studios. Given the pristine condition of their dresses, it is not impossible that they were showing off their new clothes. Mary Jane and Sylvia then presented the tintypes to Clapp before he left New Bern. These hardworking and gracious women's images are on display in our Regional History Center, reminding us of the many African American women who found freedom and paid employment during wartime.

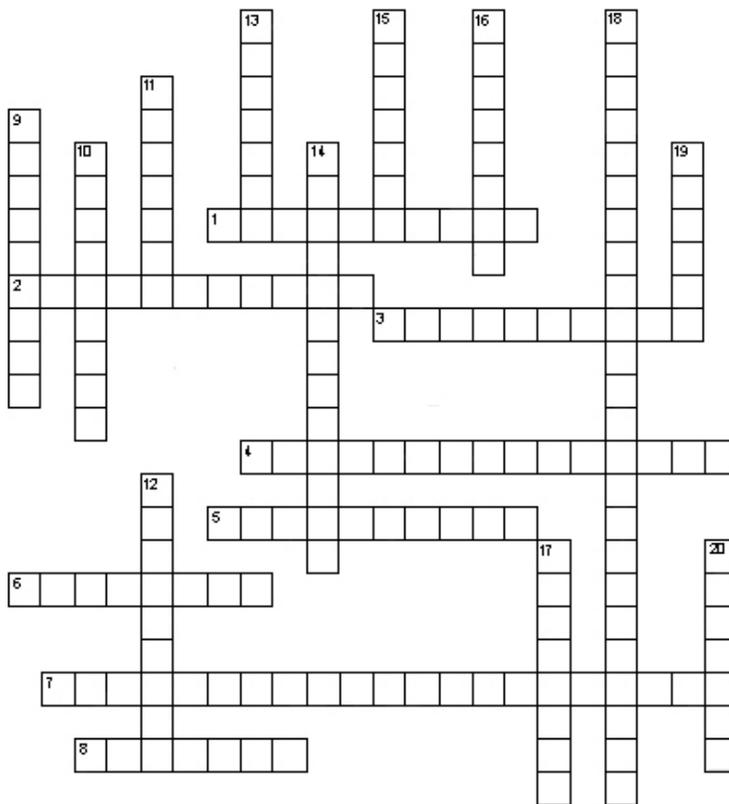
¹Lucy Berington, who was still working for the U.S. Navy in 1864, died that year from an unknown disease. Her job, although it provided better living conditions, probably cost Lucy her life, as it involved cleaning up after sick people and washing their sheets.



"Aunt Betty, Sweet Potato Pies and Ginger Cakes," pencil sketch by Fred W. Smith, New Bern, North Carolina, c. 1862-1863. Tryon Palace Collection.

Crossword Puzzle

Life During Wartime



Use the clues below and the vocabulary in bold text in each article to help you solve this crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

1. A famous Civil War battle occurred near this Pennsylvania town.
2. The person who carries the flag into battle.
3. When an army gained control of a city behind enemy lines.
4. The government agency that aided newly freed slaves.
5. The Union's military government protected nearly all _____ refugees from being returned to their former enslavers.
6. A tough, cracker-like biscuit that was often given to a soldier in his food rations.
7. A Confederate general who was born in New Bern.
8. People who followed the army to sell supplies to the soldiers.

DOWN

9. Once called the Trent River Settlement, it was later renamed after the man who started a camp there to give runaway slaves a place to live and work.
10. Term for people who are not soldiers, but live in the area where a war is being fought.

11. Alfred Finney took this type of ship from Boston to get to N.C.
12. A military school in New York that trained many of the officers who fought in the Civil War.
13. A common type of photograph during the Civil War.
14. Similar to ditches, these were dug deep in the ground to protect armies from enemy fire.
15. The rebels in New Bern burned these spots for loading and unloading boats so that the Union could not use them when they took over the town.
16. Soldiers who fight on foot.
17. A signal to wake the troops in the morning.
18. President Lincoln passed this law on January 1, 1863, freeing slaves in the rebel states.
19. What a soldier was given to help supplies last.
20. North Carolina did this on May 20, 1861.

Solution to Crossword Puzzle on Page 16.

Short Story: “Moving Day”

After New Bern fell to the Union, many slaves ran away from their masters to come to Union territory. Although not officially free, Union soldiers often treated runaway slaves as free people and helped them start their new lives. In 1863, Reverend Horace James, who was in charge of these efforts, started a camp of 800 houses near New Bern to give former slaves a place to live and work. This camp, called the Trent River settlement, was later renamed **James City**, in honor of Reverend James.

The soldier looked from his paper, back to the small cabin before him and nodded. “Here it is,” he said, pointing to the cabin. You have your orders of where to report in the morning, Wilcox?”

Papa nodded to the man, “Yes, sir.”

“Well then, welcome to the Trent River settlement.” With that, the soldier turned and walked back the way he came, leaving the Wilcox family to move their belongings inside and get settled.

“What a rude man!” Rachel, the oldest girl, sniffed. She was sixteen and knew how the world should work. “He could have offered to help us.”

Mama glared at her. “Hush, child! You saw how busy they were back at the **Freedmen’s Bureau**. He has plenty of people to help find places to stay, and I have three children that have working arms and legs. Now, put them to good use and carry these things inside.”

Rachel’s little brothers, Tom and Isaac, both grabbed an armful of clothes and quilts and stepped inside their new home. They looked around, unimpressed, before setting the items down. Isaac was the first to speak up.

“This don’t look any different than our old place!”

“Doesn’t,” Rachel corrected.

Isaac stuck his tongue out at her, sneering, “Well, Miss Thinks-she-knows-everything..”



James City, *Harper’s Weekly*, 1866. Tryon Palace Collection.

Things would have gotten worse right quick if Papa hadn’t chosen that moment to come in through the back door of the cabin. Everyone froze under his glare.

“Papa,” Tom finally asked, “what’s the use in being free if everything’s the same as when we were slaves?”

“We were lucky for the most part, Tom. The master was generally a good man but not everyone was blessed that way. Some masters are cruel, but you’ve heard stories about that. The truth is, though, gentle or cruel, that we didn’t own ourselves. One man owned my father, and another man owned my mother. Your momma and I couldn’t stand the thought of all of us ever being parted, so when the chance arose to all leave together for freedom – we did. This cabin *does* look like our old one, but it is *ours*. I’m going to do work for the army, like the work the master used to hire me out for, but this time the eight dollars a month goes into my pocket. There’s lots of things that are different here, you’ll see.”

Mama came in carrying a load from their cart. “And you all will be going to school to learn how to read and write. Rachel will, too, but she’ll go to the one that

meets in the evenings after she’s done helping me out around the house and with the laundry I’ll be taking in to help make ends meet.”

Isaac grinned at his big sister, “And if she will stop thinking about that Thomas boy we met at the Bureau.”

Rachel scowled at her little brother, “You little scamp... I sworney...”¹

“Rachel! You get out here and get a few more things from the cart. Isaac, you help your father, and Tom, you go in the backyard and see if there’s room enough for a garden.”

Isaac looked at Tom and said, “Some things may have changed but I guess we’ll always have to listen to Mama.”

AFTERNOTE: While this story is fiction, we do know that a woman named Rachel Thomas went to the schools at James City. Many of the teachers at the schools came from the North to teach, but Rachel was a good enough student that she was hired as a teacher and paid \$20 a month. There were various times after the Civil War that Miss Thomas (or Mrs. Thomas) was the only teacher in James City.

¹ An older way of saying, “I declare,” or “I swear”, usually in exasperation.

A Drummer's Life for Me?

Drummers were important people during the Civil War, serving a number of roles for an army throughout a day. Their duties included drumming the **reveille** that woke up the **infantry** troops at sunrise; summoning those foot soldiers to roll call after breakfast; directing them in parades and marches; guard duty, and lights out.

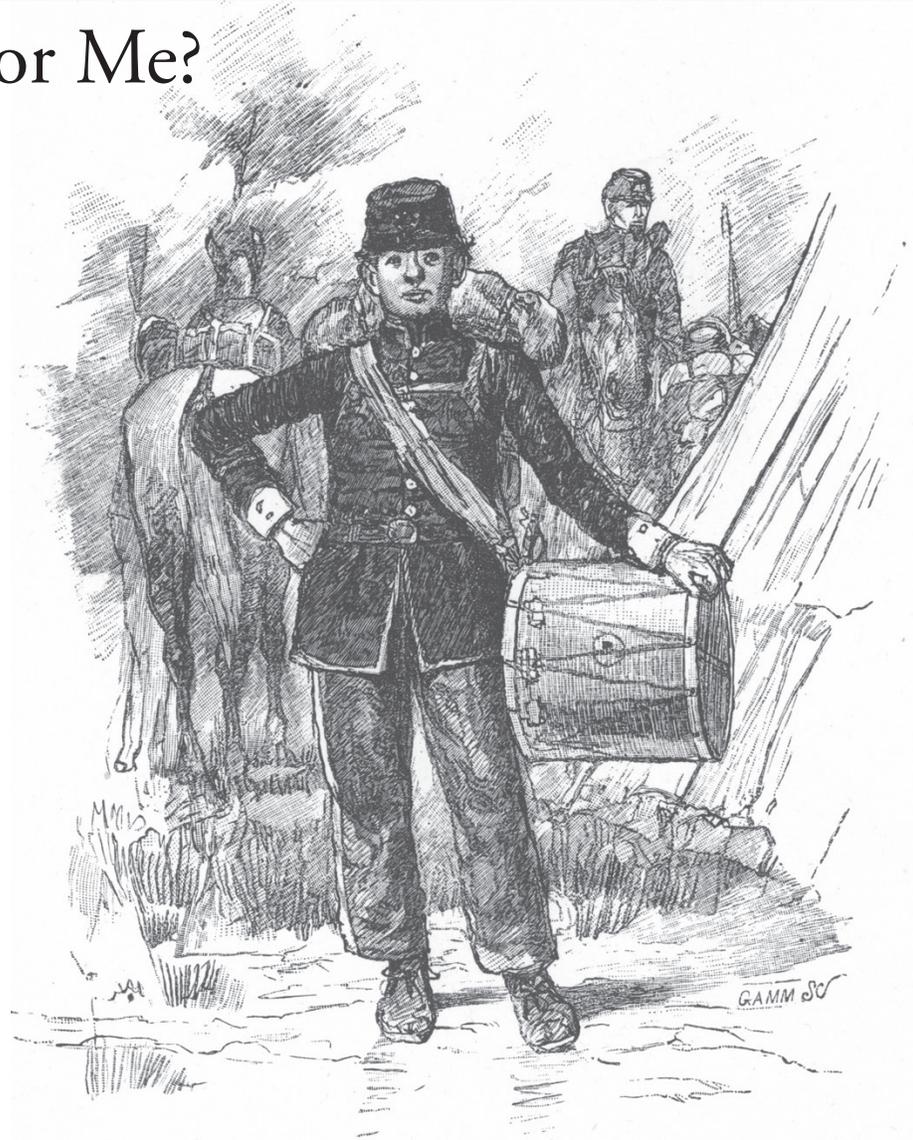
Infantry soldiers listened intently to drum rolls, as the particular sound or rhythm told them what to do next. The Army's very success was based upon how well drummers, soldiers, and leaders calling a charge understood one another. Although not used throughout a battle, drummers and **fifers** were important signalers to the troops, calling them to create different formations, to halt, or to turn. To help vary sound, a drum had different spots along its top that made fuller or duller sounds; in addition, each drumstick could produce a quieter or louder sound. Drums were made of thin layers of wood glued together around a **cylinder** form, with heavy wooden hoops at either end securing stretched sheepskin **drumheads**—snare at the top, batter at the base.

Drummers were often boys too young to fight in the war, typically between the ages of 11 and 14. Their lives were as easy or as difficult as the lives of the soldiers they worked with—heat and cold, rain or snow were just as much a part of their lives, as were the other challenges of camp life, which included mosquitoes and fleas. Also, because drummers relayed important battle information, the enemy often targeted them. More accurate ammunition and firearms



Civil War drum, North Carolina, 1861. Tryon Palace Collection.

during the Civil War made drummers' lives during battle increasingly dangerous. As swifter transportation developed, in the form of advances in railroad and steamship



READY FOR THE FRONT.

travel, armies made fewer long marches on foot, which previously had been an important part of a drummer's work.

Tryon Palace has an 1861 Civil War snare drum in its collection, made by Edwin Clayton, a cabinetmaker in Asheville, who created drums for North Carolina's Confederate soldiers. It was captured at the Battle of New Bern on March 13, 1862, by a soldier in the 21st Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. The capturing soldier was Private Levi Lamb, who served with the 21st and 36th Massachusetts Volunteer Militias before being discharged in 1864. We don't know who the Confederate drummer who carried it was, other than that he served in one of the six North Carolina regiments that fought in the Battle of New Bern, and that he was probably not happy to lose his drum!

Frontispiece from Harry M. Kieffer, *The Recollections of a Drummer-Boy* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1889). Tryon Palace Collection.

Battle of New Bern

continued from page 3

were not enough to keep the Union soldiers back. When U.S. Army General Jesse L. Reno discovered a fortification gap in Confederate lines near the railroad, his troops quickly overwhelmed the young and untried Southern soldiers.

While their fellow soldiers were losing the battle downriver, Confederate soldiers in town began destroying valuable warehouses, **wharves**, businesses, and ammunition, setting parts of New Bern on fire as they retreated westward. They also burned the railroad bridge spanning the Trent River, in order to slow down the Union soldiers' arrival into New Bern. Frightened townspeople and retreating soldiers managed to board the last train

to Goldsboro, behind Confederate lines, before New Bern fell on March 14.

Union soldiers, who had waded in the river and then walked in muddy muck for miles to reach New Bern, left a battlefield and arrived at a town in flames. The warehouses and other buildings were on fire, with black smoke hanging over the skyline of houses, shops, and churches. Burnside's aide, Daniel R. Larned, wrote his family:

I was on the field in ten minutes after the rebels retreated, and saw all the dead and dying. . . . I did all I could to ease those who were conscious—both rebels & our own. . . . We are here with some 54 guns & some 300 or more prisoners—in full possession of the City: The rebels set the City on fire, and it is still burning in

many places, but we have succeeded in putting out many of the fires.²

The Union soldiers moved quickly to set up New Bern as a Federal outpost—they took over empty houses, hotels, and public buildings, transforming them into housing for soldiers, hospitals, and army offices. Outside of town, they established surrounding camps and forts to protect the town and harbor from a Confederate takeover. New Bern remained in Union control until the end of the Civil War.

¹Daniel R. Larned, to "Sister," 18 March 1862. Daniel R. Larned Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

²Daniel R. Larned, to "Sister," 14 March 1862. Larned Papers, Library of Congress.

Featured Programs

Below are some of our many programs available for families and school groups to experience this year. Check our website at www.tryonpalace.org for a full listing of tours and programs we have to offer. Our Group Services Coordinator at (252) 639-3524 or kpierson@tryonpalace.org can help with scheduling your group's next visit.

School Tours

North Carolina Begins Here

See where North Carolina begins as you tour the reconstructed Palace, home to royal governors and North Carolina's first "government house." Meet the servants in the Kitchen and Stable Offices, and stroll outside to see our nationally-acclaimed gardens. (Grades K-12)

Day in the Life: 19th-Century New Bern

Although no longer the capital of North Carolina, New Bern remained a bustling port into the 19th century, and was the state's largest town until the 1830s. Come experience what life was like for the town's residents in a truly unique way. Tour the Regional History Museum to learn about the changes taking place in 19th-century New Bern. In the Pepsi Family Center, participate in town life by working in the turpentine distillery, making a quilt, sailing a ship, or helping a printer get the next issue completed. Step back into 1835 and visit the home of Robert Hay and his family as you help them with daily chores. Learn about the past by living in it.

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, January 1

[Note: Tryon Palace is closed in honor of the New Year's holiday, and will reopen January 2.]

Free Day: In Search of Independence Tryon Palace North Carolina History Center and Historic Area

Saturday, February 4, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Free admission to Gardens, first floors of Historic Buildings, and the North Carolina History Center's Mattocks Hall and Gateway Gallery.

Reduced ticket price to the North Carolina History Center Regional History Museum, Duffy Gallery, and Pepsi Family Center. \$10 for adults and \$3 for students. Sponsored by the Harold H. Bate Foundation.

Join Tryon Palace on a special day that looks at the many conflicts that shaped our history, from the first settlements of Eastern North Carolina to the rebuilding of a nation torn apart by war. Learn these stories by visiting the first floors of our historic buildings and our gardens and by joining in on hands-on crafts and activities for the whole family – all free of charge.

[Note: Make-up Day for Free Day in the case of severe weather on February 4th is Saturday, February 18.]

Scouting Out Tryon Palace: Girls on the Homefront

Saturday, March 3, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

\$10 per student, \$12 per adult (plus \$2 per person collected by Girl Scout office to cover the cost of registration)

Girls in North Carolina's past encountered a lot of tough times. Can you imagine what it was like to have the British search for your Patriot father? How about worrying that your town might be invaded by the enemy? Or what you would do if your brothers chose two different sides in a war? Join us to learn about girls' life on the homefront during the multiple wars North Carolina has encountered over the years. The day includes hands-on activities, games, crafts, and tours of the Governor's Palace, three other

historic homes, gardens, and the North Carolina History Center. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy this special Girl Scout Day at North Carolina's first capitol. Activities are designed for school-age girls; some activities will have a minimum age requirement. Space is limited and prepayment is required. Girl Scout leaders must register online at the Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines website (www.nccoastalpines.org) by February 17.

Civil War Weekend: Battle of New Bern

Saturday, March 10 – Sunday, March 11
Special Civil War-focused house tours, kids' activities, and reenactments of Civil War camp life throughout the weekend. Visit www.tryonpalace.org or call 252-639-3524 for more information.

Tryon Palace Theater: A Strange Reflection

Saturday, April 7, 1:00 p.m.

North Carolina History Center, Cullman Performance Hall

\$6 per adult, \$3 per student; free with regular admission

While many of the buildings would have looked the same after Union troops occupied New Bern during the Civil War, the town would have felt very different to anyone who had lived there before. Hear the voices of the people who called New Bern home during its occupation as soldiers, former slaves, and the "Secesh" (Confederate civilians) tried to make life work in a topsy-turvy world.

Tryon Palace Theater: A Strange Reflection

Saturday, April 21, 1:00 p.m.

North Carolina History Center, Cullman Performance Hall

continued on page 15

Featured Programs

continued from page 14

In Honor and Remembrance

Monday, May 28, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

In honor of those who served our country over the years and those who still do, Tryon Palace will offer free admission to all active duty and military veterans with the presentation of their military ID. Discounted admission will be given to their accompanying family members.

History Summer Day Camp: Colonial Days

Monday, June 18 – Friday, June 22, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

\$75 per person (\$60 for Council of Friends members) Step back into the past and experience life before iPods and the Internet. During this camp, campers will explore how colonists lived in Colonial North

Carolina. They'll participate in numerous hands-on activities that will give them a taste of colonial life, including cooking demonstrations, dress-up, games, natural history activities, and much, much more! So come join us this summer, and discover how Tryon Palace is making history fun! Ages: grades 3 – 5. Advance registration is necessary: visit www.tryonpalace.org or call 252-639-3524 for more information. Registration closes Monday, June 4. Maximum enrollment: 20, minimum enrollment: 8.

Celebration of the Declaration

*Wednesday, July 4

Come join us for a celebration of our nation's Declaration of Independence! Enjoy special tours, crafts, games, and other festivities for all ages! More details to come soon, visit www.tryonpalace.org or call 252-639-3524 for more information.

History Summer Day Camp: Civil War Days

Monday, July 23 – Friday, July 27, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

\$75 per person (\$60 for Council of Friends members) Come experience life in North Carolina at the time of the Civil War. Campers will start their journey in the early 1800s and will see how life changed for the many families as the war approached and then broke out. Campers will participate in numerous hands-on activities, including crafts, games, demonstrations, reenactments, and much, much more! Ages: grades 3 – 5. Advance registration is necessary: visit www.tryonpalace.org or call 252-639-3524 for more information. Registration closes Monday, July 9. Maximum enrollment: 20; minimum enrollment: 8.

Additional Reading

Here are suggestions for additional readings and resources that can be used to complement this *Living History Classroom's* articles and activities.

General

- Barden, John (ed.). *Letters to the Home Circle: The North Carolina Service of Private Henry A. Clapp*. Raleigh: NC Department of Cultural Resources (DCR), Division of Archives and History, 1998.
- Green, John B. *A New Bern Album*. New Bern, NC: Tryon Palace Commission, 1985.
- Watson, Alan D. *A History of New Bern and Craven County*. New Bern, NC: Tryon Palace Commission, 1987.
- "Civilian Wartime." North Carolina's Civilian Wartime Experience, 2011-2015. <http://civilianwartime.wordpress.com/>
- "Find Your Civil War Ancestors." North Carolina Civil War 150. <http://civilwar150nc.wordpress.com/find-your-civil-war-ancestors/>

Note: Another blog from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources observes the 150th anniversary of the Civil War through the accounts of civilians and soldiers and will be ongoing until the end of 2015.

- "Tryon Palace: Teaching Through Our Historic Sites." The North Carolina Civil War Experience, North Carolina Historic Sites. <<http://civilwarexperience.ncdcr.gov/tryon/tryon.htm>>

Note: This webpage and lesson plan, developed by North Carolina Historic Sites' Educational Services Branch, is targeted to eighth graders but there are links and other features that can certainly enhance a 4th grader's understanding of the Civil War.

The Battle of New Bern

- Daniel R. Larned Papers, 1861-1865. Washington, DC: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Note: Larned was General Ambrose Burnside's secretary, and lived in New Bern for most of 1862. His descriptions of the Battle of New Bern and life in town were written to his family and to General Burnside's wife.

Drummers

- Knight, J. Dean. "Marching Home Again." *The Palace* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 3, 6. [Published by Tryon Palace Council of Friends]
- "Civil War Drum: The Beat of History." Destination Cleveland County (NC) History Project, March 22, 2008. <<http://dcchistoryproject.blogspot.com/2008/03/civil-war-drum-beat-of-history.html>>

Note: This article is about a Civil War drummer, Alexander Norton Harmon (1845-1914), and his surviving drum that was restored by this Cleveland County group.

Food

- Anderson, Lucy London. *North Carolina Women of the Confederacy*. Wilmington, NC: Revised Edition, Winoca Press with Cape Fear Chapter #3 UDC, 2006.

Note: Pages 107-108 describe a relatively well-off Southerner's Christmas celebration toward the end of the Civil War.

- William C. Davis. *A Taste for War: The Culinary History of the Blue and the Gray*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003
- Elizabeth McKinlay Roberts, New Bern, NC. Letter to James A. Bryan, 9 August 1863. Bryan Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- West & Johnson, *Confederate Receipt Book*. Richmond, VA: G. W. Gary, Printer, 1863. Accessed through "Documenting The American South," The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (online document revised 04-03-2004) <<http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/receipt/receipt.html>>

James City Freedmen's Settlement ("Moving Day" Short Story)

- Mobley, Joe A. *James City: A Black Community in North Carolina, 1863-1900*. Raleigh, NC: DCR, Division of Archives and History, 1981.
- Click, Patricia C. *Time Full of Trial: The Roanoke Island Freedmen's Colony, 1862-1867*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

African American Women in New Bern, NC, During the Civil War.

- King, Lisa Y. "In Search of Women of African Descent Who Served in The Civil War Union Navy." *The Journal of Negro History*, 83, no. 4 (Autumn, 1998), 302-309

Make a Sewing Kit

Sewing was a valuable skill in the 18th and 19th centuries. Both men and women sewed in order to make and repair their clothing, since department stores filled with ready-to-wear clothing like we know today did not exist. Soldiers carried small sewing kits with them to repair their uniforms. Girls would carry sewing kits in their pockets, which is why they are sometimes called “pocket books.”

A sewing kit held needles, thread, a thimble, a small pair of scissors, pins, and a bit of wax to smooth the thread. You might also carry money, letters, or other precious items in a sewing kit. Learn how to make your own sewing kit with felt and use it to carry your own needles and thread, or other special items.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Most materials can be located at your local craft store or craft department.

- Craft felt: a rectangular piece 9" x 12" (this will make two or three sewing kits)
- 12" piece of 1/4" wide ribbon
- Needle
- Sewing thread
- Sharp scissors (use with adult supervision)

DIRECTIONS

1. From the craft felt, cut two rectangles – one 9"x3" and one 2"x3".
2. Take the 9"x3" rectangle and, using the scissors, slightly round the corners of one short end. This is the top flap of your sewing kit.
3. Cut a piece of thread approximately 30" long, thread the needle, and knot the two ends to form a doubled thread.
4. Take the piece of ribbon, find the middle, and sew it securely to the large rectangle, about 3 1/2" from the top (see illustration 1). This is the outside of your sewing kit.
5. Flip over the rectangle and fold the bottom edge up 2 inches. Sew down each side, leaving the top edge open, forming a pocket (see illustration 2).
6. Take the small rectangle and place it 1/4" above the pocket you just created. Sew around the two sides and bottom while leaving the top edge open, forming another pocket (see illustration 3).
7. Your sewing kit is done! To roll it up for carrying, fold up the bottom pocket, then fold the flap down over it. Wrap the ribbon around it and tie a bow to hold it together.

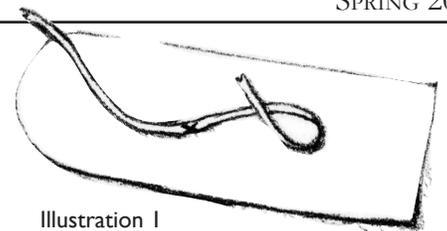


Illustration 1

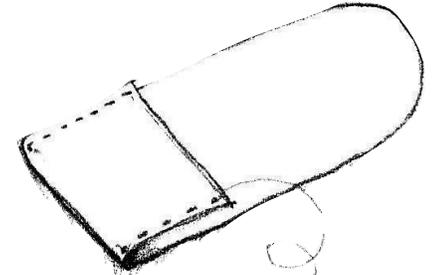


Illustration 2

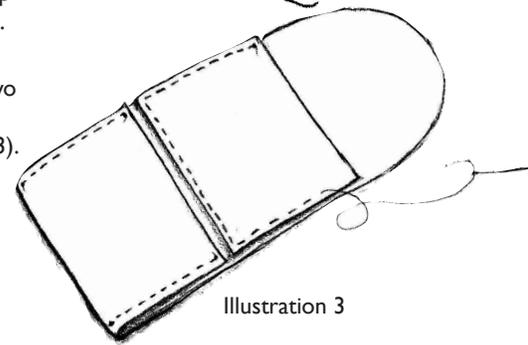


Illustration 3

Crossword Puzzle Answers - Life During Wartime

