

X
LENOIR COUNTY
DURING THE CIVIL WAR X

by

Clifford C. Tyndall

11

APPROVED BY:

Brian M. Still
SUPERVISOR OF THESIS

Charles L. Price
Charles L. Price

Joseph F. Stulman
CHAIRMAN OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

W. Hester Spawson

Fred D. Ragan
Fred D. Ragan

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Joseph G. Boyette
Joseph G. Boyette

NOCCW
F
262
L5
T9x

Clifford C. Tyndall. LENOIR COUNTY DURING THE CIVIL WAR. (Under the direction of Professor Charles L. Price) Department of History, East Carolina University, September, 1981.

The purpose of this study is to examine Lenoir County during the Civil War. This work will better define and clarify the homefront situation in that county during the four-year conflict. The great majority of Lenoir County residents never left their homes during the Civil War. These people attempted to continue their normal lifestyles while the war raged onward throughout the land. These citizens on the homefront were the backbone of the Confederacy. These people at home supported the soldiers and in many ways bore the brunt of the Civil War.

This work is written primarily to emphasize the viewpoint of the common man at the homefront level. Little has been written about this majority who never put on a uniform or fought in a single skirmish. An attempt has been made to document and illustrate conditions and changes that occurred in Lenoir County during the Civil War. The work is primarily limited to the geographic boundaries of Lenoir County.

The thesis has been divided into topical areas which will be developed chronologically. These expanded topics will constitute chapters in the thesis. The initial chapter will basically provide a physical description of Lenoir County during the Civil War. This description will include industry and agriculture, both in rural areas as well as in Kinston. Businesses, churches and homes will be described and located in the town of Kinston. The second chapter will provide a social and economic study of wartime Kinston and Lenoir County. This section will depict rapid changes that took place in the homefront social system.

Economically, the county was severely strained during the Civil War. Every citizen from child to elderly adult was affected by the conflict. The third chapter will expound on the first battle of Kinston, often called "Foster's Raid." This "raid" by Union troops from New Bern resulted in two hotly fought contests in Lenoir County as Confederate soldiers sought to stop the enemy advance. Beyond the obvious casualties, these battles greatly affected the lives of many Lenoir County residents. Kinston was occupied overnight by Federal troops immediately after the battle. Lenoir County residents experienced their first direct contact with war in this violent December of 1862. The fourth chapter will discuss the psychology of war on the local homefront. Loyalties and allegiances changed among the local people as the Civil War progressed. This chapter will also discuss the controversial hanging of Union soldiers captured by Confederate General George E. Pickett in February, 1864. The Confederate leaders argued that the men were Confederate deserters, as indeed these men were North Carolina residents. Several of these convicted deserters were from Lenoir County. As the tide of war turned against the South, many local people lost interest and wanted out. This work will examine this and other psychological phenomena. The second battle of Kinston in 1865 constitutes the bulk of the fifth topical chapter. Like the first battle, this larger engagement strongly affected the Lenoir County homefront. Immediately following the March, 1865, battle, Kinston was again occupied by Federal forces. Months prior to the second battle of Kinston, General William T. Sherman had decided on Goldsboro as his North Carolina target. The sixth chapter deals with General Sherman's use of

Kinston as a supply base for his Union forces at Goldsboro. This period of Federal occupancy and supply base use has never been adequately researched in the past. The final chapter of this study will deal with a short period from Union occupation on March 26, 1865, to the surrender of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston on April 26, 1865. As of March 14, the Civil War ended for Kinston and Lenoir County. The people began to rebuild, receive soldiers back home and look to a future of peace.

This thesis will fill a gap in scholarly works dealing with this violent period of American history. The work will bring to light new facts about the entire Civil War era and will be as enlightening about North Carolina history as it will be about the history of Lenoir County. A better understanding of the local homefront and the common man will allow us to better understand the Civil War.

LENOIR COUNTY
DURING THE CIVIL WAR

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

by
Clifford C. Tyndall

September 1981

J. Y. JOYNER LIBRARY
EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous people have been instrumental in helping me prepare this thesis. Sincere thanks go to Dr. Charles L. Price of the East Carolina University faculty for his help in supervising this study. His guidance, suggestions and extreme patience made the completion of this thesis possible. I am also grateful to Dr. William N. Still, Dr. Joseph F. Steelman and Dr. Keats Sparrow who read the thesis and offered suggestions and corrections. Special thanks go to my parents, Margaret Ann and Wilbur Tyndall. Without their support, encouragement, understanding and financial aid, this thesis would never have been completed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A DESCRIPTION OF KINSTON AND LENOIR COUNTY: 1861-65	1
II. A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DESCRIPTION OF LENOIR COUNTY: 1861-65	26
III. THE FIRST BATTLE OF KINSTON, DECEMBER 1862: "FOSTER'S RAID" ON KINSTON AND GOLDSBORO	50
IV. LOYALTY AND LIBERTIES IN LENOIR COUNTY: 1861-1865	69
V. THE SECOND BATTLE OF KINSTON AND THE OCCUPATION OF KINSTON: MARCH, 1865	83
VI. THE USE OF KINSTON AS A UNION SUPPLY BASE: MARCH- APRIL 1865	97
VII. THE LAST DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN LENOIR COUNTY: MARCH 14-APRIL 18, 1865	112
APPENDIX A: MAP OF KINSTON DURING CIVIL WAR	121
APPENDIX B: FIRST BATTLE OF KINSTON: DECEMBER 14, 1862 (MAP) . .	123
APPENDIX C: SECOND BATTLE OF KINSTON: MARCH 10, 1865 (MAP) . . .	124
APPENDIX D: PHOTOGRAPHS OF KINSTON-LENOIR COUNTY AREA: 1884 . . .	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY	130

CHAPTER I
A DESCRIPTION OF KINSTON AND
LENOIR COUNTY: 1861-65

Lenoir County, North Carolina, was an important area to the Confederate States of America in 1861. This rural county, situated in the Neuse River Valley, was an agricultural leader in the state, producing large amounts of valuable food products. Kinston, the largest town and county seat, served as a regional commercial and industrial center and was also deemed vital to Confederate war efforts. Kinston and Lenoir County would indeed play an important role to the Confederacy throughout the war.¹

Lenoir County's population in 1860 totaled approximately 11,000, being made up of about 6,000 "free" citizens and 5,000 slaves. Kinston, the only real population center, had around 700 "free" residents and 640 slaves, giving a total population of 1,340. Other towns existed in Lenoir County in 1860, but they were but small hamlets. These villages included Moseley Hall (presently called La Grange) and Pink Hill. Pink Hill at this time was located several miles from where the present town is located. In this rural setting, composed of vast woods, deep swamps

¹For a general history of Lenoir County see: William S. Powell, Annals of Progress: The Story of Lenoir County and Kinston, North Carolina (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1963); Talmadge C. Johnson and Charles R. Holloman, The Story of Kinston and Lenoir County (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1954). Neither work deals adequately with the Civil War period of Lenoir County.

and rich farmland, population was widely scattered and communication in these isolated areas was poor at best.²

Kinston served as a trading and manufacturing center for a vast agricultural area surrounding it and contained numerous businesses and industries. The town was located along the cliff-like banks of the Neuse River which flows through the center of eastern North Carolina. Recently completed tracks of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad skirted the northern side of the town. Both the Neuse River and the railroad were important communication lines in 1860. The Neuse, though treacherous, handled a large number of small ships and schooners. The Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad was a busy line running from Goldsboro to Morehead City.

Kinston's city limits in 1860 can be seen on the attached map. (See Appendix A.) The approximate southern boundary rested along present-day Shine Street. Heritage Street formed the western limits, while Front Street marked the eastern side of town. Washington Avenue was the northern-most artery in Kinston.³

In 1860 Kinston had a variety of professions including among others carpenters, painters, teachers, brick masons, clerks, butchers, druggists and merchants. There were approximately twenty merchants in this town of only seven hundred people, an indication that Kinston served as

²1860 Census, Population Schedule, Washington, D.C., U.S. Bureau of the Census, hereinafter cited as 1860 Census, Population Schedule, Lenoir County; 1860 Census, Slave Schedule, Washington, D.C., U.S. Bureau of the Census, hereinafter cited as 1860 Census, Slave Schedule, Lenoir County.

³1882 map of Kinston, North Carolina, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; 1850 map of Kinston, Lenoir County Historical Association, Kinston, North Carolina.

the commercial center of the county. Interestingly, Kinston had four physicians in 1860, an unusually large number for a small town. Many people were associated with the coach and buggy industry that was situated in Kinston.⁴

The most affluent capitalists in Kinston were members of the Washington family. The Washingtons operated several industries in the immediate Kinston-Lenoir County area. They owned an iron foundry and during the early war years furnished large amounts of iron to the Confederacy. Their largest operation was not the foundry, however, but a shoe factory. This shoe factory was located in a huge three-story building on Queen Street. To furnish leather for this factory the Washingtons also owned a tannery, located at the intersection of Gordon and Heritage streets, on the Neuse River side. The family also operated a steam powered lumber milling and planing company which employed six people in 1860. The location of this mill has not been determined.⁵

A carriage-wagon factory belonged to the family of Jasper B. Webb. The building in which this enterprise was housed was located at the intersection of Gordon and East streets. The Webbs also operated a machine shop that was connected with the carriage factory. Webb's Carriage Factory in 1860 produced fifteen buggies, sixty carts and three wagons. Eight permanent employees worked at the Webb's workshops.⁶

⁴1860 Census, Population Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

⁵1860 Agricultural and Manufacturing Census (Records of Fifteen Southern States), Washington, D.C., U.S. Bureau of the Census, hereinafter cited as 1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County; "Kinston In the Sixties," Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 1.

⁶Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 2.

Perhaps the largest single manufacturing business in Kinston was the Dibble and Brothers Carriage Factory. Over seventy-five employees worked at the plant, and production was much higher than at Webb's Carriage Factory. In 1860, Dibble Brothers produced approximately six hundred buggies and harnesses, as well as one hundred wagons and carts.⁷ Though the 1860 Census mentions this business, other contemporary descriptions of Kinston ignore it.

Kinston also possessed many smaller businesses. The Hilton family operated a plant which produced decorative woodwork. The business was located near Queen Street on Peyton Avenue. A grist mill was operated in the wood factory during the Civil War years.⁸

After the outbreak of war several of Kinston's businesses were engaged in the production of goods for the Confederate army. A huge bakery located on Queen Street became a large-scale producer of hard-tack. Because of the extreme shortage of labor, Confederate soldiers stationed in the Kinston area were sometimes detailed to work in the bakery. Some eyewitnesses reported that these enlisted men could be seen making and kneading dough in huge troughs, using hoes and other such garden tools.⁹

A tailor shop was owned and operated by Jasper B. Cummings during the Civil War years. This clothing operation, located on Queen Street, employed a number of men in the production of Confederate uniforms.

⁷1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 2.

⁸Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 1.

⁹Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 1.

Cummings was reported to have made a uniform for Confederate General Robert F. Hoke.¹⁰

Jasper B. Webb owned a "cane mill." Sugar cane was brought to the mill and crushed by a horse-powered apparatus. The syrup was then boiled in huge pots and dispensed in various sized containers. Evidently the cane mill and Mr. Webb's house were all located on or near Gordon Street.¹¹

One small manufacturing business was affected early in the war by the manpower shortage caused by conscription. The company produced tools, principally shovels, and was located on Queen Street. John C. Washington was a partner in the shovel factory. This was the same Washington associated with the shoe factory, foundry and tannery. In December, 1862, another owner, W. W. Campbell, wrote Governor Zebulon Vance concerning labor problems at the small plant.

We have employed in our works, four men who will be subject to involvement in the next call for conscripts. They have been working for us some time. We furnished the shovels used in the Neuse River defenses and earth works near here. We also have orders from all our State R. R. for all we can furnish with these men and I pray your excellency would exempt these four men from enrollment so I may continue them in our employment as shovel makers and wagon makers. We have a blacksmith shop also and have done a great deal of repairing horse shoeing etc.? ever since the army have been in our vicinity.

Basically, what Campbell wanted was a note from Governor Vance releasing four workers from threat of military conscription. The only clue as to what happened is a small note scribbled on the back of Campbell's letter to the governor: "The Governor has no power to exempt.

¹⁰Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 1.

¹¹Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 2.

Make application to Col. Mallet who will give all necessary information."¹²

Two other companies listed in the 1860 Census were the J. B. Webb Hubb Factory and the Carpenter and Dixon Shoe Factory. The Hubb Factory commenced operation in June, 1860. Little is known of its location and production capabilities. The Carpenter and Dixon Boot and Shoe Factory is also somewhat of a mystery, although it produced merchandise valued at \$2,600 in 1860.¹³

Beyond these manufacturing concerns, there were numerous other commercial ventures in Kinston, about which little is known. One of them was a print shop, owned by Walter Dunn. The large, three-story structure housing the print shop was located on Queen Street.¹⁴

At least one large hotel was located in the town of Kinston. The Saint Charles Hotel, as it was called, was located on the corner of Gordon and Heritage streets. George McRae was the acting innkeeper during the Civil War years. The Saint Charles Hotel was quite crowded during the war years, as many refugees fleeing Union occupation forces at New Bern migrated to Kinston. Many of these displaced New Bernians paused and spent at least a short time in Kinston, often staying at the Saint Charles Hotel. The hotel throughout the war years served as a center of social life in the immediate Kinston area. Many soldiers and

¹²W. W. Campbell to Governor Zebulon Vance, December 1, 1862, Governor Zebulon Vance Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹³1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 2.

¹⁴Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 1.

civilians passing through Kinston mentioned the old Saint Charles Hotel in their letters and diaries.¹⁵

The train depot located in Kinston served as both a freight and passenger station for the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. The depot was a brick structure with a cupola on top. A large loading platform faced the single track that passed the station. The station and tracks were located on the northern side of Kinston in 1860. The northernmost street in Kinston in 1860 was probably Washington Avenue, which roughly paralleled the railroad tracks. A telegraph office was located near the train station as the telegraph lines followed the tracks of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad.

Retail businesses in Kinston during the Civil War included clothing and hardware stores. Except for the previously mentioned census records which show a large number of merchants in the town, there are few records available concerning such retail businesses.

Kinston did have a number of government buildings at the outbreak of the Civil War. The Lenoir County courthouse was located in Kinston. This courthouse was a large brick building located on the corner of Queen and King streets, almost in the exact location as the present courthouse. Built around 1830, this brick courthouse lasted until it was destroyed by fire in 1878. A whipping post and set of public stocks were located on the courthouse square. This public punishment paraphernalia was from a bygone era and remained as a decoration of sorts, a conversation piece for the town of Kinston. Apparently these artifacts stayed on the courthouse square until 1868. A large bell hung

¹⁵Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 10.

between large posts outside the courthouse. Anyone could ring the large bell by pulling upon the rope that trailed down from the clapper. This public bell was used to sound various alarms and attract townspeople's attention for special occasions.¹⁶ A brick jail building was located on the courthouse square during the Civil War years. Many soldiers mentioned the old brick jail, describing it as a veritable dungeon.

Kinston certainly had a larger number of churches than would ordinarily be found in such a small place. Denominations present in the 1860s included the Methodists, Episcopalians, Free Will Baptists, Missionary Baptists, and the First Disciples. The Methodist church was located on the corner of Caswell and Independent streets. The Episcopal church was situated on the corner of Caswell and Queen streets. At the corner of Bright and McLewean streets stood the First Baptist Church. A Missionary Baptist church rested on North Caswell Street, while the Primitive Baptist church was on Washington Street. The Disciples of Christ built their church on the southwest corner of Gordon and Heritage streets.¹⁷

Many of these churches played a fairly prominent role in Kinston's Civil War history. The Methodist church was used as a hospital during the war years, especially after the two major battles of Kinston. This and other churches provided needed hospitals and aid stations for both

¹⁶Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 2.

¹⁷Mike Kohler (ed.), 200 Years of Progress: A Report of the History and Achievements of the People of Lenoir County (Kinston, 1976), 63, 127-130, hereinafter cited as Kohler, 200 Years of Progress; Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 3.

Union and Confederate soldiers. The churches also provided a needed spiritual uplift during those times of a most depressing war.

Hospitals were located not only in churches but in other places as well. A general store situated on Queen Street and known as the Nichols Store was used briefly as a hospital. A large, old house, owner unknown, located on the corner of Bright and Heritage streets was also used as a hospital. Smallpox victims were isolated and evidently were fairly widespread in the Kinston area. These smallpox cases were stationed in two hospitals. One was located in a tent city on the Neuse River lowgrounds. Another smallpox treatment area was formed in what was called "Stubbs Field." This site was probably one of the numerous agricultural fields located north and west of Kinston's city limits.¹⁸

The descriptions of Kinston during the Civil War vary greatly from individual to individual. A Confederate soldier wrote to his cousin in June, 1863, "Kinston is a charming little place situated on Neuse River [and] is beautifully laid off. The streets are wide with beautiful shade trees on either side. The houses are mostly on the cottage stile [sic] with large flower gardens in front" ¹⁹ Another Confederate soldier camped near Kinston in November of 1862 recorded the following thoughts, "We are camped close to a little town by the name of Kinston. . . ." He added, "the water ain't so good here as it was in .

¹⁸Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (No. 9, November, 1913), 3.

¹⁹Henry T. Kennon to "Truthful Cousin," June 9, 1863, Kennon Letters, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Kennon Letters.

Virginia. This country is more like Columbia than any place I have seen. It is Warmer here than it is at home."²⁰

Many Yankee soldiers visited Kinston after the battles of 1862 and 1865. Generally, these Union troops recorded favorable impressions of the community. For instance, one Union soldier wrote of Kinston in December, 1862: "Kinston seemed to be a place of more thrift and business and had a more Yankee look than any place I have seen in the state."²¹ A Union soldier in April, 1865, had some positive thoughts on Kinston. Henry J. H. Thompson wrote: "I think it is as healthy a place here as I have seen. . . . [The] place is elevated and the water runs very swift in the river." Thompson continued: "There is splendid flower gardens here, also lots of figg and peach trees, there is a plenty of tobacco and some apple jack and apple butter."²² Overall, Union soldiers received a favorable impression of Kinston's war-time appearance.

In 1860 Lenoir County outside of Kinston was a predominately rural, agricultural area. However, there were some small businesses and industries operating in these rural settings. In the Contentnea District, which lies north of Kinston, there were three business operations. Perhaps the largest of these was a milling and saw mill operation owned

²⁰J. W. Pursley to Jane Pursley, November 21, 1862, Mary Jane Pursley Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Mary Jane Pursley Papers.

²¹Alfred Roe, The Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Boston, 1911), 165, hereinafter cited as Roe, The Fifth Regiment.

²²Henry J. H. Thompson to Wife, April 3, 1865, Henry J. H. Thompson Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Henry J. H. Thompson Papers.

by Stephen Phillips with a permanent work force of eight men.

Phillips's grain mill ground approximately nine hundred bushels of corn per year. He also operated a steam powered saw mill which cut fifteen hundred logs per year.²³ Another mill was owned and operated in the Contentnea District by Wilson Tilgman. Tilgman's water-powered mill ground approximately thirty-five hundred bushels of corn and one thousand bushels of wheat annually. Mr. Tilgman employed only one person at the small mill site. In the same district, census records show that a small buggy factory was in operation at the same time. Mr. C. H. Clark's factory employed four workers and produced four buggies, one sulky, and one wagon annually. The operation also produced approximately fifty dollars worth of cart wheels each year. Clark evidently ran the small buggy factory as a sideline to his farming operation.²⁴

The Pink Hill area of southern Lenoir County was labeled the Trent District, being named for the Trent River which flows towards New Bern from this area. The largest industry in this district was a milling operation owned by William T. Wooten. Wooten's water-powered mill ground two thousand bushels of corn and seven hundred bushels of wheat per year. The mill had only one employee. There were two other mills in the Trent District, which at the time was perhaps the most isolated and sparsely settled part of the county. Both of these mills were similar. Owned respectively by Richard Noble and Allen Wooten, they were both water-powered and ground between one thousand and fifteen

²³1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 1.

²⁴1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 1.

hundred bushels of corn each year. They each show no record of grinding wheat in 1860.²⁵

The Woodington District, also a very rural and sparsely settled area, had only one business listed in 1860. Chauncey Gray owned a turpentine distillery, the only reported turpentine distillery in the 1860 Manufacturing Schedule. Gray's plant employed four men and produced approximately six thousand barrels of turpentine each year. This equaled about thirty-five thousand gallons of turpentine per year. Gray's business used a process that boiled pine sap and distilled turpentine.²⁶

The Sandhill District, located in the western part of Lenoir County, had only one industry listed in the 1860 Census, a grist mill owned by J. H. Jackson. This water-powered mill ground approximately six thousand bushels of corn each year. The mill employed only two workers, even though it was a large producer of corn meal.²⁷

Two other districts listed in the 1860 Census were the Bear Creek District and the Kinston District. The Kinston District was located outside the town of Kinston. Both of these districts had limited industry. The Bear Creek District had two water-powered mills that produced both corn meal and wheat flour. The Kinston District had a large mill that was steam powered. The steam plant was used to grind corn and flour and also to saw wood. Owned by John Tull, this operation near the town of Kinston employed eight men.²⁸

²⁵1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 1.

²⁶1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 1.

²⁷1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 1.

²⁸1860 Census Manufacturing Schedule, Lenoir County, 1.

The industrial concerns in rural Lenoir County consisted largely of saw mills and grain mills. Both of these were needed by the rural people--lumber for construction and maintenance purposes and ground corn and wheat for food. These operations served only the people in the immediate area. Local farmers brought in their corn or wheat to be ground into meal or flour. They then carried it back home, minus a small percentage kept by the miller for his payment. Farmers would carry in their own logs, cut from recently cleared land. These logs were then cut into needed lumber products. This type industry served people only in the immediate area.

The only two different operations were the buggy factory and the turpentine distillery. Of these two, probably the turpentine products were the only ones to reach beyond the confines of Lenoir County. Uses of turpentine included medicinal uses for animals and humans as well as uses in the manufacture of paint products. It is possible that some of those thousands of gallons of turpentine may have ended up well outside Lenoir County. The buggy factory in Contentnea, because of its limited production capabilities, probably did not reach beyond a local market.

Though some industry was present in rural Lenoir County, the majority of the people outside Kinston relied almost entirely on agriculture for a livelihood. Lenoir County farms in 1860 were widely varied in size and value. Apparently the largest and wealthiest farms in the county were located in the area near Kinston. The Census of 1860 provides the researcher with a substantial amount of data concerning Lenoir County farms at the outbreak of the Civil War. Almost every Lenoir County farm had a rather large number of farm animals, which were

used as work animals, transportation, food and clothing. Even the smallest of farms in the county had a least one horse. A horse could be used to pull a plow or a cart, or one could ride the animal. Mules were commonplace, especially among the larger farms. Many of the larger farmers in Lenoir County had between twenty and thirty mules. Mules provided an excellent power source for these rural operations. Oxen were also a fairly popular sight on Lenoir County farms during the Civil War period. A high percentage of the larger farms used these powerful work animals in their fields.²⁹ The census figures show that many of the smaller farmers could not afford either mules or oxen. These small farmers used the more versatile horse.

Almost every farmer from the largest planter to the smallest yeoman operator owned sheep. Sheep were, of course, an important source for clothing materials. A large part of the nineteenth century wardrobe was made of wool, so sheep were raised primarily for their woolen coats rather than for meat. Milk cows, listed in 1860 as Milch cows, were also found on every farm in Lenoir County. Many farmers had only one, but virtually everybody owned a milk cow. From these cows' milk, farmers could produce butter, cheese, cream, and buttermilk. Each farm became a sort of dairy operation in itself.

Perhaps, the most popular farm animal in 1860 was the pig.³⁰ Every farm raised swine as a necessity, as pigs provided pork which was a staple of the Lenoir diet. Meat and meat by-products from a pig could

²⁹1860 Agricultural and Manufacturing Census (Records of Fifteen Southern States), Washington, D.C., U.S. Bureau of the Census, hereinafter cited as 1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County.

³⁰1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

be smoked, salted, and preserved in various other ways. Lard, an animal fat derivative, was used for cooking oil and for seasoning foods. An annual ritual each year was called the "hog killing." At one of these events, a farmer and his family and friends would slaughter several pigs and prepare meat products. Always done in the winter, so as to lessen chance of spoilage from high temperatures, the annual event became a sort of festivity combined with work. Perhaps it could be compared with a quilting bee or a corn shucking, as these were often held in the rural areas.

Although swine were easily the most numerous farm animals in Lenoir County in 1860, many of the larger planters also raised cattle.³¹ These larger operators had the pleasure of eating a larger amount of beef in comparison with the pork-dominated diet of the smaller farmer. Nearly all farmers raised poultry--chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, and guineas. These fowl provided both meat and eggs. Rich manure from all these animals could be used to fertilize fields and gardens. Few, if any, commercial fertilizers were used by the rural Lenoir County agriculturalists.

These farmers raised more than animals. Lenoir County farmers produced a variety of agricultural products in 1860, but these products were far different than those of the twentieth century. The most commonly produced crop in 1860 was corn. Virtually every farm grew what was then called Indian corn. Indian corn was a broad term that described any type of corn with a speckled or reddish appearance. This Indian corn grown by the Lenoir County farmers was used for consumption by both

³¹1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

humans and animals. Usually, it was dried and then taken to local mills to be ground into meal. As the war dragged on, people who had been dependent on this bountiful corn supply began to have problems. Not only was it difficult to find corn that one could buy, but also it was nearly impossible to ship it anywhere. John Hutchinson, who was living in Graham, North Carolina, wrote the following brief letter.

I am a refugee from New Bern, N.C. and entirely dependent on the lower counties for all the corn I use. Through a friend in Lenoir County made an engagement for twenty-five barrels of corn and shall feel generally obliged to you for a permit to bring it up from Mosely Hall or Kinston, it is for the use of my family and not for sale.³²

The leaves of the corn plant, called blades, were an important source of food for the farm animals during the winter months. These blades were dried and bundled together into stacks. This animal fodder was widely produced in Lenoir County in 1860.³³

Crop diversity was minimal in 1860 in Lenoir County. Only a handful of other crops besides corn were widely grown in the county. Most of these other crops were food products, necessary for the survival of the farmer and his animals. Many farmers produced several bushels of beans and peas per year.³⁴ These peas and beans were mostly used for human consumption, but some farmers undoubtedly fed their animals some of the legume products.

Another food product found on Lenoir County farms in 1860 was the potato. Actually there were two different types of potatoes raised in

³²John Hutchinson to General Leventhrant [?], December 18, 1864, H. G. Hutchinson Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³³1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

³⁴1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

this period: the Irish potato and the sweet potato. Of these two, the sweet potato was the most widely grown. While we find that small farmers might produce five to ten bushels of Irish potatoes per year, the same men would grow one hundred bushels of sweet potatoes in the same period.³⁵ The sweet potato was a favorite of the people of Lenoir County in the nineteenth century. That yellow-orange potato was baked, mashed, made into bread and pies, and even fried. The sweet potato was a staple of the Lenoir Countian's diet in the Civil War years. The sweet potato was one of the most frequently described and mentioned foodstuffs in eastern North Carolina during the war years.

Other crops produced by the Lenoir County farmer in 1860 were in limited quantities. Occasionally farmers would produce fairly small amounts of wheat and rye, although for some reason many agriculturalists would shy away from these grain products. The largest amounts of wheat in Lenoir County were grown in the Kinston vicinity. Some farmers produced as much as 125 bushels in the Contentnea District of Lenoir County. Little wheat was produced in comparison in the southern part of the county--Woodington, Sand Hill, and Trent districts.³⁶

Tobacco in 1860 was virtually non-existent on Lenoir County farms. Only a few of the larger planters near Kinston grew tobacco, and even then it was in small quantities. One of the largest farmers in the Kinston area, Council Wooten, produced only 125 pounds of tobacco in 1860.³⁷ Most likely, tobacco raised in 1860 by these local planters was

³⁵1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

³⁶1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

³⁷1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, 25, 26.

largely for personal usage, with perhaps a small amount being sold locally. Kinston did not acquire a tobacco sales market until the 1880s.

Cotton was the only farm product that could have been considered a cash crop in 1860. Many of the smaller yeoman farmers did not grow any cotton, but larger planters produced fairly large amounts. At the time of the 1860 Census, cotton quantity was measured by the number of four-hundred-pound bales produced on a farm. Council Wooten's large plantation near Mosely Hall produced 250 of these huge cotton bales in 1860.³⁸ Kinston was well known as a local trade center and cotton was frequently identified with the town. Union soldiers in 1862 mentioned the number of bales of cotton found in Kinston, many of which were burned or badly damaged by retreating Confederates. Kinston must have had a fairly thriving cotton trade during the war years.

Records of crop production in Lenoir County during the Civil War years are scarce. A few agricultural "tax in kind" records are still in existence. From these records we can get an idea of production on the farms in Lenoir County during the war years. J. W. Cox in 1863 produced 700 bushels of corn, 5 bushels of rice, 18,000 pounds of fodder and 20 pounds of wool. One-tenth of each of these products was given to the Confederacy. The 1864 tax records of a woman farmer, Elizabeth Sherard, indicate the Confederacy again demanded 10 percent of a person's yearly production. Mrs. Sherard totaled 30 bushels of corn, 20 bushels of oats, 290 bushels of sweet potatoes, 6,000 pounds of fodder, and 20

³⁸1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, 25.

pounds of wool.³⁹ So farm production continued with a much higher degree of taxation from the central government.

The number of farms in Lenoir County at the outbreak of the Civil War was approximately six hundred. These farms varied immensely in size, value, and production. For example, James Tindal, living in the Trent District, had twenty acres of cleared land and fifty acres of woods. Council Wooten, of the Bear Creek District, was a somewhat larger operator; he utilized over three thousand acres of cleared land and ten thousand acres of woodland. Tindal's farm was valued at three hundred dollars, while Wooten's added up to over sixty-five thousand dollars.⁴⁰ Big farmers and small farmers worked right beside one another. The larger farmers such as Wooten used a fair number of slaves in their operations. Small yeoman farmers, like James Tindal, had no slaves; he did his own work alongside his family in the fields.

In addition to the crops and livestock, land was a significant item among the farmer's assets. Most Lenoir County farms had a large percentage of uncleared, unimproved land. This abundance of woodland made the cleared land that much more valuable.

Comparing the average value of farms in 1860 of two districts within the county can give a good idea of economic patterns in 1860-61. Farms in the Kinston District averaged approximately thirteen thousand dollars in value. In comparison, the farms in the Trent District (Pink

³⁹Agricultural and tax records, James W. Cox Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as James W. Cox Papers.

⁴⁰1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, 9, 10, 25, 26.

Hill) were valued at a sum approximating two thousand dollars.⁴¹ Agricultural operations around the Kinston area were larger and therefore had more cash value. The farms away from the immediate Kinston area appeared to be smaller and more scattered.

As to what the farmers and people of rural Lenoir County looked like during the war years, we have to depend largely on the reports of Union soldiers. Union soldiers, who frequented the county on raids and campaigns, found the people of rural Lenoir County fascinating and often recorded their impressions in letters home. A house and occupant near present-day Woodington Community were described by a Union soldier in 1862. George A. Chase wrote, "At a poor old trembly shanty I was reminded of home by a plaster image of a sheep and lamb like ours on the shelf in the sitting room. It was about the only ornament in the house which is one reason why I noticed it. A little boy not as large as Walter Bennet was chewing tobacco and spitting all around."⁴² This is not a very favorable report of the people of rural Lenoir County in 1862.

The Civil War affected almost immediately Lenoir County agricultural operations. Conscription of men into the Confederate military caused manpower shortages throughout the South. Women were forced to fend for themselves. Slaves became troublesome and ran away into Union lines. As early as 1862, Union troops were impressed with the desolation observed on Lenoir County farms. The historian of the Forty-Fifth

⁴¹1860 Census Agricultural Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

⁴²George Chase to "Father and Mother," December 21, 1862, George A. Chase Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as George A. Chase Papers.

Massachusetts Regiment wrote in December, 1862, "Wide fields remained uncultivated, and in not a few cases ripened crops were left to perish unharvested. Vast barns and granaries were left entirely empty. On the most extensive plantations but few signs of life were visible." The historian continued, "Now and then a few women were found who had been left behind." These descriptions recorded by the regimental historian of the Massachusetts troops impress the fact that Lenoir County agriculture was in sad shape by 1862. The same historian also reported that many of the rural dwellings had been "attacked." According to the historian, "The retreating rebels had stripped the houses of most of their movable furniture and all eatibles."⁴³

Another Union soldier, an army chaplain, recorded his impression of the farm lands of Lenoir County in December, 1862. "Signs of war were visible on every side," he wrote. "The fences had been destroyed by our men as they marched and bivouacked. The fields were tracked and torn by artillery or army wagons."⁴⁴ Of course, what the chaplain had observed were the direct effects of a military campaign. In this case, it had been the recent Foster's Raid during December, 1862.

Lenoir County farms began to experience severe labor shortages as early as 1862. Males of working age were mostly conscripted for military service. In December, 1862, General Foster's troops entered Kinston and found only three adult males there. A Confederate soldier

⁴³Albert W. Mann, History of the Forty-Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Militia (Boston, 1908), 107-108, hereinafter cited as Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment.

⁴⁴H. Clay Trumbell, War Memoirs of an Army Chaplain (New York, 1898), 245, hereinafter cited as Trumbell, War Memoirs.

stationed in Lenoir County in April, 1863, recorded this impression of the agricultural situation at that time: "My friend you don't know anything about [war] and hope you never will. There is no corn planted here nor won't be this year for there is nobody to plant it here. This is splendid corn country but that will be no corn or wheat for the fields is [sic] occupied by soldiers."⁴⁵ start

At the beginning of the war slave labor played an important role in Lenoir County agriculture. The 1860 Census Slave Schedule shows there were approximately five thousand slaves in the county in 1860-61. The town of Kinston had a population of 640 slaves, which was almost equal to the number of free citizens. The greatest slave populations were located in the Lenoir County districts of Kinston and Bear Creek. The smallest slave populations were located in the areas of sparse free population--Sand Hill, Trent, and Woodington districts.⁴⁶

In March, 1862, Union forces captured New Bern, some thirty-two miles east of Lenoir County. With this apparent utopia of freedom only thirty miles distant, many slaves found the urge to flee to New Bern too strong to resist. Scores of slaves began to steal away to the Craven County-New Bern area seeking something called freedom. A letter from W. Duke to James W. Cox illustrates the slave problem that arose in 1862. "Your boy Jim," he wrote, "left me last night as two or three other negroes in the neighborhood left. I think they are trying to get to the Yankee lines. I had no difficulty with him."⁴⁷ Other evidence

⁴⁵J. W. Calton to "Brother and Sister," April 10, 1863, John Washington Calton Letters, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁴⁶1860 Census, Slave Schedule, Lenoir County, passim.

⁴⁷W. Duke to James W. Cox, undated letter, James W. Cox Papers.

of the exodus of large numbers of slaves to Union lines is seen in this letter dated March, 1862: "A good many negroes are running away and are going to the Yankees every day. All mine are gone to there from the oldest to the youngest. [They] left as soon as they heard that New Bern had fallen."⁴⁸ Of course, not all the slaves ran away to New Bern, but evidently a great number did make the attempt for freedom.

Some slave owners in Lenoir County decided in late 1862 to move their slaves further away from the temptation of Union forces at New Bern. One local man wrote his sister, "Mr. Perkins has brought all his negroes out which is a very wise step if all of the slave holders had likewise six months ago New Bern would have been clear of them [runaway slaves]."⁴⁹

Whether the slaves ran away or were taken away by their owners, the farms of Lenoir County were critically short of labor. A necessary labor force for the larger agricultural operations was effectively removed, largely due to the closeness of Federal forces at New Bern. Besides hurting agriculture, the depleted slave labor force also weakened some of the industries and businesses in Kinston.

Many of the smaller yeoman farmers in the more isolated areas of Lenoir County may have been affected only slightly by the slave labor problem. These farmers did not have slaves to begin with, so the exodus of black laborers did not bother these men nearly as much as it did the

⁴⁸William F. Loftin to "Mother," March 18, 1862, William F. Loftin Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as William F. Loftin Papers.

⁴⁹Joseph F. Fowler to "Sister Hannah," December 21, 1862, Joseph F. Fowler Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Joseph F. Fowler Papers.

planters. These yeoman farmers may have been hurt more by Confederate conscription.

Because of the shortage of labor and other wartime problems, agricultural production had been greatly curtailed by 1865. Earlier in the war James W. Cox had been a fairly diverse farmer but by 1865 he produced only two things--corn and fodder, and only limited amounts of these, with the Confederate Government taking one-tenth of that through the tax in kind.⁵⁰ Charles Tournier, a young Union soldier, in 1865 noted this neglect of agriculture while camped in a large field near Kinston. He wrote in his diary: "They say it used to be a cotton field, but no signs of it now. Some of these plantations are almost covered with bushes that have sprung up in the last 4 years."⁵¹

Lenoir County farms and related agricultural activities were in poor shape as early as 1862 and their condition worsened through the next three years. The county was dotted with abandoned farms, empty fields and plundered buildings. Lenoir County farms were severely hampered by the mid-war years, and agricultural operations had almost ceased by the end of the war, especially the larger operations.

While the Civil War had a substantial impact on the farms of Lenoir County, the actual physical changes caused by the conflict to the town of Kinston were minimal. The general appearance of Kinston probably changed only slightly during these war years. Kinston suffered minor

⁵⁰Agricultural Records, James W. Cox Papers.

⁵¹Diary of Charles Tournier, March 5, 1865, New Bern Historical Collection, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Diary of Charles Tournier.

fire and artillery damage during the two nearby battles, particularly the one in 1862. But life continued on in the small town as businesses and commercial ventures functioned despite severe labor shortages. Physically Kinston grew little, but socially and economically the area was modified substantially by the four years of the Civil War.

CHAPTER II
A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DESCRIPTION
OF LENOIR COUNTY: 1861-65

Kinston, a quiet rural town, changed considerably during the years of the Civil War. The conflict that ravaged much of the South had pronounced effects on the populace and appearance of Lenoir County. Drastic social, political, and economic changes occurred as a direct result of the four-year war. These sweeping changes included a rise in vice and immorality, enhancement of women's rights and responsibilities, and increased social activities in wartime Kinston. Children were affected as the county educational system suffered from inadequate financial support throughout the war. Most of these changes originated in the Kinston area and then permeated into the isolated rural sections of Lenoir.

Descriptions of prewar Kinston make it appear as a rather sedate little town. With its churches and industrious people, Kinston appeared to be a model of rural American piety. But once the Civil War was officially declared and soldiers moved into Kinston, the small town changed somewhat in both manners and atmosphere. Confederate soldiers came into Kinston by the hundreds, sometimes thousands; and they were from all over the state. Many were from outside the boundaries of the Old North State.

A letter written by one of these Confederate soldiers early in 1861 gives the first clue as to Kinston's makeup during the Civil War period.

He wrote: "We have no military company nor nothing else except rum shops in Kinston."¹ Soldiers, especially when off duty, have a reputation for drinking and carousing and fighting. So sedate little Kinston became full of soldiers and "rum shops." Though ownership of these bars remains a moot point, activities associated with them are well documented. A young Confederate soldier found the moral codes of many of his fellow men too lax. "One of our officers went to town [Kinston], got drunk and got on a horse and started back to camp and got his horse in full speed, and went to stop him, and fell off and the horse ran over him knocking him senseless for a while."²

These Confederate soldiers served many long hours of boring picket duty. Off hours were spent by many at these saloons in an attempt to alleviate some of the camp tedium. By mid 1862, Confederate officers decided to curtail some of the wild antics going on in Kinston. In May, 1862, a provost guard was placed around Kinston. No soldiers were allowed to visit the town unless they were on military commissary business.³ But even this measure was not sufficient to keep the fully determined, die-hard drinkers and gamblers from Kinston. Samuel Lockhart, a young Confederate soldier, wrote: "a heap of them [soldiers] go without leave or license. They have got three or four of our fellows in jail now for running about through the town and getting drunk."

¹William F. Loftin to "Mother," January 3, 1861, William F. Loftin Papers.

²Samuel P. Lockhart to Emaline Lockhart, May 11, 1862, Hugh C. Browning Papers, Manuscript Collection, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Browning Papers.

³Samuel P. Lockhart to Emaline Lockhart, May 11, 1862, Browning Papers.

Besides getting drunk, the men would also curse, dance, play cards, and do other vile things. The same young soldier continued his excellent description of his fellow soldiers' wild escapades. "Mother, you have no thought how they go on down here," he wrote, "I have heard more cursing and swearing since I left home than I have ever heard in my life before. Sometimes they get hold of liquor and they get drunk and rip and dance and curse; it makes [one] scringe [sic] to hear it." As for playing cards, the young Lockhart reported he could start at one end of a Kinston street and "find three or four and five packs of cards."⁴ This drinking, cursing and gambling was even observed on Sundays. It appears that the large influx of Confederate soldiers livened up the immediate Kinston area and quickly changed the town from a rather docile village to a carousing boom town by mid 1861.

Soldiers in the Kinston area were entertained by females as well as by cards and drinking. Confederate soldiers throughout the war years reported that Kinston was populated by a goodly number of females. As a matter of fact, there were far more descriptions of local women than there were of rum shops, saloons, and drinking escapades.

In early 1862 a Confederate soldier wrote his sister about Lenoir County:

I am engaged at riding around the country a great deal of my time. I enjoy myself very well. I find a plenty of young ladies on my travails some very pretty ones too. I think if the war goes on much longer I shall have to get me a sweetheart oute here.⁵

⁴Samuel P. Lockhart to Emaline Lockhart, May 11, 1862, Browning Papers.

⁵Joseph F. Fowler to "Sister," January 9, 1862, Joseph F. Fowler Papers.

He wrote again in October, 1862: "The young ladies up here is all write," He mentioned that he had made friends with several and he was "very well pleased with their appearance and manners."⁶

Evidently, the people of Kinston held occasional social gatherings for the Confederate soldiers in the area. In June, 1863, Henry Thomas Kennon wrote: "What makes it [Kinston] above charming tis filled with the finest young ladies of the state." In the same letter Kennon mentions "refugees from New Bern and other places now in possession of the enemy."⁷ This might be a key as to where the young ladies came from. New Bern and a large portion of North Carolina's coastal region fell early in the war. Perhaps the unusually large number of young females in Kinston was due to the fact that they were mostly refugees. Refugees from these occupied coastal sections flooded into the Lenoir County area. These young ladies and their families undoubtedly spent some time in Kinston as they fled westward from Federal troops. The Confederate soldiers stationed in the Kinston area found these women provided quite a morale uplift. For many of these soldiers, their social life was probably never better.

Henry Kennon told of a happening in early June, 1863. "The ladies gave us a picnic last Thursday and a dance at night," he wrote; "I had one invitation but did not attend."⁸ Earlier in April, 1863, the

⁶Joseph F. Fowler to "Sister," October 27, 1862, Joseph F. Fowler Papers.

⁷Henry T. Kennon to "Truthful Cousin," June 9, 1863, Kennon Letters.

⁸Henry T. Kennon to "Truthful Cousin," June 9, 1863, Kennon Letters.

Raleigh Daily Progress reported that Kinston had a social event. A correspondent stationed in Kinston wrote a story describing the patriotic party.

On last evening we had a party here attended by many of our young ladies whose blooming cheeks and sparkling eyes gave beauty to the scene. Woman, lovely woman, bright star of our existence made to guide us to mortality and virtue; and well the ladies of Kinston played their part in this our deadly struggle.⁹

Leonidas Polk, a Confederate sergeant, gave another clue as to the social life in wartime Lenoir County. "The boys and girls of Kinston have balls and parties nearly every night."¹⁰ Other soldiers continued to write home and describe the women and festivities around Kinston.

Perhaps the biggest social event of the war occurred in February, 1864. Several different soldiers mentioned the happening. The Masons on February 20, 1864, held a celebration in Kinston in honor of Colonel Isaac E. Avery, a member of the Sixth North Carolina Regiment, who was killed at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. The events began with an oration given in the Kinston Baptist Church. The memorial speech was given by Richard York. Eyewitnesses reported "the speech was well written but badly delivered."¹¹ The title of the oration was, "Tell my father that I died with my face to the enemy." Avery became a local hero and martyr and soon the Masonic Lodge was renamed the Master I. E. Avery Military

⁹Raleigh Daily Progress, April 15, 1863.

¹⁰Leonidas Polk to "Sallie," February 13, 1864, Leonidas L. Polk Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Polk Papers.

¹¹Leonidas Polk to "Sallie," March 27, 1864, Polk Papers.

Lodge, No. 1.¹² Immediately following the speech a picnic was held on the church grounds, at which both civilians and soldiers mingled.

Parties or not, Confederate soldiers continued to visit Kinston with drinking on their minds. Leonidas Polk vividly described officers in various alcoholic induced situations.

A Lt. went to town, got drunk, had a fight, got cut pretty badly, but of course nothing is said. Another higher in rank goes to town gets drunk, falls in the branch, ruins fine clothes. . . .¹³

Soldiers continued to mention the numerous females in the Kinston area. These ladies did help keep Confederate spirits high. As one Confederate soldier wrote, "We had a good many ladies to look at us today. So you may no [sic] we done better than we would of if their [sic] had of been none here."¹⁴

Undoubtedly Kinston was teeming with women during the years of the Civil War. Prostitutes, though present, were rarely mentioned by local people or Confederate soldiers. The only possible clue to the presence of prostitutes was recorded by a Union soldier occupying Kinston in April, 1865. The soldier, Henry J. H. Thompson, stated "The wimen [sic] in general dress very nice here, but there is some bad houses."¹⁵ There is no doubt that young Thompson was describing houses of ill repute in Kinston.

¹²Collection Description, Mrs. Benjamin R. Lacy Collection, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹³Leonidas Polk to "Sallie," February 13, 1864, Polk Papers.

¹⁴William Martin to "Rebecca," April 30, 1864, William A. Martin Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Leonidas Polk to "Sallie," February 21, 1864, Polk Papers.

¹⁵Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 3, 1865, Henry J. H. Thompson Papers.

Although many soldiers in Civil War Kinston did indeed drink and carouse, everyone did not run wild in the streets. Many Confederate men, particularly younger ones from rural areas, were raised fairly strictly in a religious environment. Samuel P. Lockhart was shocked by the apparent lack of religion on the part of the military personnel in the Kinston area army camps. Lockhart wrote home: "There is no more Sunday here than if there weren't no Sunday at all. I don't reckon there is a half dozen pious officers in the regiment." Lockhart, who did not participate in the antics of many of the other soldiers based at Kinston, commented "I have not spoken to a lady in four months."¹⁶ This soldier was quite a contrast to many of the other Confederates who enjoyed the temptations afforded by Kinston.

Notwithstanding Lockhart's criticism, a goodly number of devout men were found in Confederate army camps surrounding Kinston. Leonidas Polk was one of these. He wrote his wife: "I stay in my tent and read my Bible--pays better." This was the same letter in which Polk mentioned all the parties and celebrations in Kinston.¹⁷ Polk was one soldier who was not interested in the night life offered by Kinston. In January, 1863, J. W. Pursley wrote his sister that a friend, Joe Wilson, "has got to praying every night in town [Kinston]." Pursley went on to describe prayer meetings that were held each night in various companies. One individual, a Mr. James, held a prayer meeting each night and then preached on Sundays.¹⁸

¹⁶Samuel P. Lockhart to Emaline Lockhart, May 5, 1862, Browning Papers.

¹⁷Leonidas Polk to "Sallie," March 27, 1864, Polk Papers.

¹⁸J. W. Pursley to "Dear Sister," January 3, 1863, Mary Jane Francis Pursley Papers.

Several soldiers mentioned Kinston's churches. Early in the spring of 1862, John Clark described the interaction between a local church and soldiers stationed near it. The Confederate camp was located approximately four miles from Kinston. The soldiers apparently attended several sermons while stationed near the church. Clark described one oration, given by a Mr. Faucette, as "one of the best sermons I have heard in a long time."¹⁹

So a dichotomy was formed by the soldiers in Lenoir County: some drinking and partying in Kinston, the others attending prayer meetings and sermons in local churches. The small town of Kinston offered, literally, the best of two worlds.

Many of the men stationed at Kinston's military camps enjoyed the experience of living in Lenoir County. A Confederate soldier, Henry Sullivan, wrote a friend: "We are having a good time at Kinston--plenty to eat, pork, corn bread, and potatoes. . . ." ²⁰ Other soldiers who had been stationed earlier in Virginia said prices were lower in Kinston than at their former camps. Some soldiers would buy meals or "victuals at 25 cents at a private house," while others would go to Kinston and buy foodstuffs so they could do their own cooking. In one letter J. W. Pursley mentioned that the price of chickens was only fifty cents each. Yet, in the same letter he described the theft of a chicken from a local

¹⁹John C. Clark to "Cousin," March 31, 1862, Browning Papers.

²⁰Henry Sullivan to "Dear Friend," March 11, 1863, Lalla Pelot Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Lalla Pelot Papers.

house.²¹ Even at the prices mentioned by Pursley, the urge to steal from local people was apparently very strong.

Soldiers reported that almost half of the food they consumed was bought by themselves. Anything above and beyond the government issued beef and meal had to be purchased.²² Lenoir County farmers and local merchants undoubtedly profited by selling to these hungry troops.

A majority of Confederate soldiers stationed in the Kinston area thought the place was healthy. A. J. Clinton wrote to a friend:

"Except for a few cases of small pox, the general health of our regiment is very good, but little sickness prevails at this time." He continued:

"I like North Carolina very well and would as soon stay here as any place we have been."²³ Even a Union soldier in 1865 wrote, "I think it

is as healthy place as I have seen. . . . The Place is elevated and the water runs very swift in the river."²⁴

While these Confederate soldiers added vigor to the town of Kinston, the average resident of Lenoir County continued onward in a relatively normal manner. The townspeople tried to adapt their lives and businesses to the war effort. Besides the social events and festivities associated with the soldiers, life was basically routine for the average Kinstonian during the early years of the Civil War.

²¹J. W. Pursley to Jane Pursley, November 21, 1862, Mary Jane Pursley Papers.

²²A. J. Clinton to Jane Pursley, December 29, 1862, Mary Jane Pursley Papers.

²³A. J. Clinton to Jane Pursley, December 29, 1862, Mary Jane Pursley Papers.

²⁴Henry Thompson Diary, April 3, 1865, Henry J. H. Thompson Papers.

Communications remained open to Kinston from western areas of the state until the spring of 1865. Rail lines were open to civilians as well as military traffic, as soldiers in the Kinston area often asked relatives and friends to pay visits or send personal goods.²⁵ Citizens of Lenoir County soon discovered that the train from Goldsboro began deviating from its regular schedule in the spring of 1862. One soldier remarked: "The train runs so irregularly from Kinston down here that it is impossible to tell you anything about it." He followed up the statement by saying that usually two trains ran per day from Goldsboro to Kinston.²⁶ By early 1865 the train ran only at uncertain intervals and was used primarily by the Confederate military. As with railroads throughout the Confederacy, the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad was simply worn out by 1865.

The people of Kinston were quite friendly and receptive to the needs of the Confederate soldiers. Many citizens in the Kinston area opened their houses to visiting relatives of soldiers. Throughout the war years quite a few soldiers were visited at Kinston by their friends and relatives. Also, many refugees passing through Kinston lodged at private residences. One Confederate frequently mentioned a Mr. Jackson, who would allow people to board at his house in Kinston. Occasionally even soldiers would board at private residences. One Confederate soldier wrote, "The Sheriff of this place [Kinston] took me in to

²⁵Henry K. Burgwyn to Father, March 27, 1862, Burgwyn Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as Burgwyn Papers.

²⁶Henry K. Burgwyn to Father, April 7, 1862, Burgwyn Papers.

board with him till we can get fixed up again. He will not have any pay for my board."²⁷

The townspeople of Kinston had to cope with the idea of a "friendly occupation." This term refers to the virtual military invasion of Lenoir County in 1862 by Confederate soldiers. This small town suffered quite a cultural shock as these hoards of military men moved into the immediate Kinston area. Initially drunken, rowdy soldiers ran wild in the streets; later provost guards protected the sanctity of Kinston. Troops moved into the county courthouse and officers commandeered private residences for military headquarters. General Nathan Evans used the courthouse, while General Braxton Bragg utilized the Peebles House [Harmony Hall]. Lawrence O'Bryan Branch also seized a local residence as his office and headquarters.²⁸

For some unknown reason, Confederate military regulations were established in 1863 that limited the operation of Kinston's businesses to six hours per day. All local businesses operated between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. After the mandatory closing time, the people of Kinston would often take to the streets in order to walk about town. Henry T. Kennon, a Confederate soldier, said that after three was the "most pleasant time of day to stroll about town uninterrupted by guards." A Raleigh newspaper's correspondent in Kinston reported in April, 1863, that "our citizens lounge about the streets talking about

²⁷William G. Morris to "Dear Companion," March 17, 1862, William Groves Morris Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as W. G. Morris Papers.

²⁸Thomas Litton to "Dear Companion," December [no day], 1862, Jane Fisher Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Jane Fisher Papers.

the war and our future prospects."²⁹ The people of Kinston had to speculate on the war because they had no newspaper to inform them of the latest news. All news entered Kinston by way of train, telegraph, military dispatch, personal letter or word of mouth. Other newspapers placed correspondents in the Kinston area, but Lenoir County had no newspaper during the Civil War. *

Lenoir County males had other problems besides poor communications. Many of them were apprehensive that they would be drafted into the Confederate army. William F. Loftin, a civilian telegraph operator in Kinston, mentioned the draft in a letter of January 22, 1862. "We had a draft in Kinston last Monday," he wrote, "but fortunately escaped."³⁰ Not all men in the South were running to join up with the military. In fact many fled the draft and had a constant worry about the threat of conscription and forced service.

The people of Lenoir County found that war was always near. Union cavalry raids originating in New Bern were fairly commonplace throughout the war. Federal saboteurs and spies visited Kinston during the war years. On April 26, 1864, Union spies at Kinston fired up a locomotive and attempted to drive a train loaded with quartermaster and commissary stores to New Bern. The effort was thwarted by a man named Harvey, who was employed at the Kinston rail yard. Harvey heard the attempt to fire up the train and ran out to check on the situation. He yelled and several men jumped off the locomotive and disappeared into the night.

²⁹Henry T. Kennon to "Truthful Cousin," Kennon Letters; Raleigh Daily Progress, April 15, 1863.

³⁰William F. Loftin to Mother, January 22, 1862, William F. Loftin Papers.

Apparently, these spies were attempting to steal badly needed Confederate supplies and disrupt the southern war effort in Lenoir County.³¹

By mid 1863, reports indicate that besides Union cavalry raids and spy activities, the citizens of Lenoir County had other problems with which to contend. Contemporary writers mention the problem of Negro scavengers. These black renegades, mostly runaway slaves, reportedly raided homes by night and hid in remote swamps during daylight hours. A few people stated that these blacks often tried to incite other slaves to leave eastern North Carolina farms and join their cause for freedom. These raiders were considered a real threat to the security of Lenoir County farms as evidenced by William F. Loftin. Loftin wrote of a former slave named Tony. Tony suddenly appeared in the Kinston area during the Union occupation in December, 1862, wearing a Union army uniform. Tony claimed to be a Union soldier, stole a pistol and bragged of Confederates he had slain.³² Many local slave owners feared that runaway slaves might one day return and seek vengeance. Such acts did occur during the Civil War.

Perhaps the ultimate description of the city of Kinston and its wartime appearance and social life appeared through the courtesy of a Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper. A Charleston Courier correspondent spent several weeks in the immediate Kinston-Lenoir County area during the latter part of 1862 and early 1863. The Tarboro Southerner borrowed the story on Kinston and published it in its January 17, 1863,

³¹Henry K. Burgwyn to Father, April 28, 1862, Burgwyn Papers.

³²William F. Loftin to Mother, January 22, 1862, William F. Loftin Papers.

edition. The Charleston paper's correspondent used the pen name "Personne" and his delightful story was titled "A Bird's Eye View of Kinston, North Carolina."

Take several time honored old shanties, shake together until they are thoroughly mixed, then pour out ab libitum on a level surface; dash the mixture with a modern architecture done in wood and white paint; add two churches, a brick jail, and a hotel; pepper with about two hundred and fifty inhabitants, of whom forty are elderly females, eleven stand on the threshold of womanhood and perhaps a hundred are nothing to do idle remnants of the male gender; make a strong infusion of children and babies, and spice the whole with an innumerable quantity of dogs and cats, pigs and cattle, and you have the town of Kinston--the soberest, dullest, bluest collection of modern antiquities on this continent. Age has withered its beauty; and time has stolen the rose from its cheeks.

The history of the day is brief as a lover's kiss, without half its attraction. After sleeping as far as possible into the day as conscience will allow, you eat a breakfast that is enough to make a man howl, light your pipe and "locomote." The streets are comparatively deserted, and except around "headquarters" where there are gathered officers and couriers waiting on the General, everything wears a mouldy, petrified Pompeish look that is distressing. The only sounds that infest the air are perhaps the distant discharges of the guns in the hands of returned pickets and towards eleven o'clock the strong falsetto of the steam whistle on the engine and the rumble of the approaching cars from Goldsboro. This is the event of the day, for we get our mail. For an hour everybody disappears to read the papers. An hour more is consumed discussing the contents and then comes what they call dinner--a synonym for sliced sweet potatoes, boiled grass, salt pork, the stewed beef that wasn't eaten the day before, and an occasional fowl, that for age and toughness might as well have lived in the days of Noah. Then follow pipes, sleep, oblivion. There is no society, no music and not a solitary inducement to temptation, unless to go out and catch the small pox as a dernier resort. There is a single lady only at the hotel where we are messing and everytime she makes her appearance we look upon her as a sort of angel who has left her wings upstairs and dropped in to take pot luck with us. The women all chew yellow snuff and the men set on the door steps and gape.³³

Though far from a flattering description of Kinston, "Personne's" story gives historians an excellent illustration of civilian wartime Kinston

³³Tarboro Southerner, January 17, 1863.

and Lenoir County. Apparently after the correspondent had resided in Charleston, Kinston evoked severe cultural shock.

The people of rural Lenoir County found themselves affected by the Civil War also. Rural males were vulnerable to Confederate conscription and women found their social roles changed by the war. Unfortunately the lives of these rural residents were not well documented during the years of the conflict. Perhaps the best description of Lenoir countians outside the city limits of Kinston is provided by Charles Tournier. Tournier, a Union soldier under General Schofield's command in 1865, described several different rural households in Lenoir County: "The first house we visited contained very little furniture and no carpets. The inmates were but two, a mother and daughter. The women were quite plump but very yellow for pastime they chewed snuff sticks." Another rural household was run by women on a large farm of three hundred acres. "They had never owned any slaves," Tournier wrote. "They could not read or write. We saw no books or papers while there."³⁴ Evidently all the men at both these farms were involved with the Confederate military. By 1865 conscription had severely depleted a large percentage of the male work force in Lenoir County.

Another description, by a United States Army chaplain, provides a clue to a typical Lenoir County farm during the Civil War. The chaplain wrote: "The men of the house were off at war. The wife and mother was in charge. She was no more inquisitive than a Northern woman would have been, but like many another person whom I met in this region, she had only vague ideas of the North and the Union Army."³⁵

³⁴Diary of Charles Tournier, March 22, 1865.

³⁵Trumbell, War Memoirs, 242.

During the Civil War years, the women of Lenoir County were frequently forced to operate the farms themselves. These rural women were hardy, self-sufficient types, although the farms under their control did not flourish as they had prior to the war. Lenoir County farms deteriorated and fell largely to ruin during the years of the Civil War. It appears that both the people and the farms of Lenoir County languished as the conflict dragged on.

The children living in Lenoir County found their lives disrupted by the conflict. Teen-age males found themselves being forced into the Confederate military or into the labor force at increasingly lower ages. All the young suffered intellectually and socially from a weakened educational system. The Lenoir County common school system had been very energetic and effective prior to the outbreak of the war. This public system along with a well developed private set of schools created a formidable educational machine in Lenoir County.³⁶

The social statistics of the 1860 Census show that there were twenty-six schools in Lenoir County immediately prior to the Civil War. Of these, one was listed as a collegiate institution. Appropriately enough, this school was called the Lenoir Collegiate Institution. Founded in 1855, the Institute was actually a preparatory school for those wishing to attend a full college. The Lenoir Collegiate Institution had four teachers and sixty pupils in 1860.³⁷ Near the start of

³⁶Kohler, 200 Years of Progress, 111-114; 1860 Census, Social Statistics, Washington, D.C., U.S. Bureau of the Census, hereinafter cited as 1860 Census, Social Statistics, Lenoir County.

³⁷Kohler, 200 Years of Progress, 114.

the Civil War this school ran into operating difficulties, both financial and personal, and it closed around 1861.

Lenoir County also contained two female academies or women's high schools. One of these had two teachers and thirty-five students while the other had only one teacher and twenty-five pupils. Another institution, labeled a female seminary, was listed as being in Lenoir County in 1860. A seminary was really nothing more than a secondary school for women. It did not necessarily have religious ties. This seminary had two teachers and thirty-five students. A total of four private schools were found in Lenoir County in 1860. These were probably private elementary schools for small children. These four schools had a total of four teachers and eighty-five students. As with the other schools, we do not know exactly where these institutions were located.

But by far, the most numerous schools in Lenoir County were common schools. In fact by 1860, there were seventeen of these public schools. Each of these seventeen schools had one teacher and a combined total of 523 students. Unlike most of the private schools in the area, these common schools had students of both sexes. It is of these common schools that we today have the greatest amount of data. Very little survives of the 1861-1865 period school records of Lenoir County except a few bits and pieces from 1864. During 1864 James Cox was chairman of the Board of Superintendents of Lenoir County Common Schools. A three-man Committee of Examination made sure that all teachers in the common schools of Lenoir County were qualified. This Examining Committee was composed of James Cox, James P. Bryan, and William Coleman. This group

of men received approximately sixty dollars for their efforts in selecting and qualifying school teachers for the county.³⁸

In the fall of 1864, Lenoir County was divided into twenty-five school districts. By this time it appears that the number of teachers had dropped from seventeen in 1860 to three in 1864! These three teachers, Martha C. Harper, Fanny W. Parker, and Francis W. Jones, were licensed on a yearly basis, most recently from March, 1864, to March, 1865. All three of these teachers were listed in the County Common School Reports as being three top teachers. They were rated as "No. 1," which denotes the highest rank available to educators at the county level. All three were qualified to teach spelling, writing, reading, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. Apparently the School Examining Committee hired just three teachers and these were the very best available in 1864.³⁹

Sometime in 1864, a male instructor named George Turner was examined by the Board. The Board was "satisfied as to his moral character." Turner was qualified to teach spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. Mr. Turner is not mentioned in the listing of teachers in 1864.⁴⁰

Teachers' salaries varied among the three teachers of 1864. Martha C. Harper received the highest salary of three hundred dollars per term.

³⁸1864 Common School Reports, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Common School Reports-Lenoir County, North Carolina, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as 1864 Common School Reports, Lenoir County.

³⁹1864 Common School Reports, Lenoir County.

⁴⁰1864 Common School Records, Lenoir County, James W. Cox Papers.

Fanny W. Parker received approximately two hundred dollars. Francis Jones was paid only a meager forty dollars. Payment was based on actual time teaching or length of school term. Martha C. Harper had the fewest students of all three teachers. So payment and number of pupils did not correlate in 1864.⁴¹

Early school records show that the school term in 1864 was only three months long. The State of North Carolina did not lengthen the public school term until World War I, and even then only to six months. So the probable length of the Lenoir County's Common School term in 1864 was approximately three months per year. It may very well have been less due to adverse conditions during the war. 3 feet

Schools were financed both by the state and individual counties. In the spring of 1864, Lenoir County was allotted \$948 by the state for the operation of common schools. Each county in the state received the same amount of funding in 1864. This differs sharply from prewar years when school funding was largely based on county population. The state Literary Fund which provided extra money for common schools before the war appears to have largely disappeared by 1864. County taxes also were used to provide funding for common schools. Records are sketchy at best, but it is evident that school funding had dropped substantially by 1864.⁴²

Besides the three school teachers and the Examining Committee members, one other individual was paid from the school funds. The sheriff

⁴¹1864 Common School Reports, Lenoir County.

⁴²1864 Common School Reports, Lenoir County.

of Lenoir County received a five-dollar bonus for some type of school-related business in 1864.⁴³

Perhaps the most startling figures of the school records of 1864 are those dealing with attendance. Children of school age were those between the ages of five and twenty-one. In 1864, there were 866 males and 791 females falling into this age group. The actual number attending school was 31 males and 41 females. The 1860 Census reported that well over 500 children attended common schools in Lenoir County in that year. Four years later there were over 450 fewer children enrolled in the Lenoir County public schools.

The three teachers mentioned earlier had approximately the same number of students at each school. Martha C. Harper taught ten males and eight females. Francis W. Parker had twenty female and nine male students. Francis W. Jones had a total of twelve males and thirteen females. Francis Parker was the lowest paid but taught the second highest number of students in the county. These three teachers instructed the total of seventy-two pupils enrolled in the Lenoir County common schools in 1864.⁴⁴

These figures concerning attendance, teachers, and finances in 1864 tell the story of the common schools during the Civil War. In 1860 a fair number of children were attending Lenoir County public schools. By 1864, attendance had dropped drastically, as had the number of hired educators. The number of teachers decreased from seventeen in 1860 to just three in 1864. The attendance figures are even more startling.

⁴³1864 Common School Records, Lenoir County, James W. Cox Papers.

⁴⁴1864 Common School Records, Lenoir County, James W. Cox Papers.

The number of children attending common schools dropped from a prewar apex of 523 to a wartime low of 72. By 1864 less than 5 percent of the children of legal age were attending school. Prior to the war, far more males than females had been enrolled in school. During the war years there was a decline in male attendance and subsequent upward trend in female students.⁴⁵ This can be partly explained by the fact that as males reached their teens they were needed badly as farm and industrial labor. Many others entered military service. Young males were needed to supplement the badly depleted labor force in Lenoir County.

Undoubtedly, there were fewer funds available for schools during the war years. With only three teachers in the county, many children of school age probably lived too far from these widely scattered institutions to attend.

Unfortunately the records deal only with 1864. But it is obvious that a severe deterioration of Lenoir County's common school system had occurred by 1864. The educational system, at least the public one, was falling apart by the latter months of the Civil War.

Economics played a vital role in the lives of people of Lenoir County during the war. Earlier in this study a few prices were mentioned that concerned some of the Confederate soldiers stationed in Kinston. Civilians felt the economic problems caused by the long conflict also. In October, 1863, a correspondent for the Raleigh Daily Progress wrote concerning the prices in Kinston. Part of this story included the following excerpts:

I sold corn on Saturday 26th instant at one dollar per bushel and I would be pleased to sell for less, but when I have to

⁴⁵1864 Common School Records, Lenoir County, James W. Cox Papers.

pay 4 dollars per pound for spun cotton, 40¢ per pound for salt and other things still higher, it can't be afforded.⁴⁶

John F. Mallet kept a journal and recorded some of the typical prices in the Kinston-Lenoir County area in 1863. He listed the following prices: flour, \$11.00 per barrel, pork, \$.12½ per pound, coffee, \$.42 per pound, cheese \$.25 per pound, cornmeal, \$1.25 per bushel. Mallet was also upset about the cost of sugar, molasses, and homespun. He best expressed his displeasure with prices by writing: "Oh the horrors of war."⁴⁷

Typical wages during the early part of the war were low. According to the 1860 Census, the average carpenter earned \$1.50 per day without board. The average laborer was paid only \$.75 per day without board, while a female domestic with board earned \$1.00 per workday.⁴⁸ With the rapid rise in prices during the Civil War, many such laborers must have had difficulty purchasing foodstuffs. Many people must have agreed with Mallet's sentiments about the horrors of warfare.

As prices rose and inflation attacked the Southern economy, local taxes increased proportionately. By 1862-1863, Lenoir County tax rates had risen to \$.6½ on the dollar. Confederate taxes also increased during this period. A tax in kind was levied on almost all goods produced in the Confederacy. This tax in kind called for one-tenth of total production to be paid to the Confederate government. This tax

⁴⁶Raleigh Daily Progress, October 3, 1863.

⁴⁷J. F. Mallet Journal, 1863, John F. Mallet Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁴⁸1860 Census, Social Statistics, Lenoir County, 3.

was labeled as "an act to lay taxes for the common defense and carry on the government of the Confederate States."⁴⁹ Confederate tax assessors were hired and around the first of March each year, farmers had to "exhibit or declare" all the hogs they had slaughtered in the previous year. The farmer then paid a proportional part of the final product. James Hines of Lenoir County produced over 10,600 pounds of pork in 1863 and he paid the Confederate government approximately 654 pounds of bacon.⁵⁰

Many Lenoir County farmers paid their taxes late. James M. Hines did not pay his 1861 taxes of \$137.51 until January, 1864. Hines was a fairly prominent citizen in the county and it is evident that his taxes increased substantially during the war years. Hines paid taxes of \$118.47 in 1860. By 1863, his taxes had increased to \$219.77 per year. Mr. Hines each year pushed back his payment of the taxes. Hines's tax records show more confusion and increase in rate as each year of the war passed.⁵¹

All the evidence above proves that the economic conditions in the South disintegrated slowly as the Civil War progressed. County taxes as well as Confederate taxes increased greatly. Prices for food and other consumer goods rose steeply throughout the war. Economic hardships were a commonplace part of life for the average resident of Lenoir County during the Civil War.

⁴⁹County Tax reports, 1862-1863, Wait and Leone Hines Collection, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Wait and Leone Hines Collection.

⁵⁰County tax reports, 1862-1863, Wait and Leone Hines Collection.

⁵¹County tax reports, 1862-1863, Wait and Leone Hines Collection.

Civil War brought change to Lenoir County. It undoubtedly spurred social, political, economic, and educational changes within the county. No Lenoir County resident completely escaped these sweeping alterations of society.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST BATTLE OF KINSTON, DECEMBER 1862:

"FOSTER'S RAID" ON KINSTON

AND GOLDSBORO

In December, 1862, Union troops under General John G. Foster moved against Goldsboro, North Carolina. Their plan was to disrupt Confederate communications at the important rail junction of Goldsboro. As a result of this raid, Kinston and Lenoir County experienced their first large-scale contact with Federal forces.

In order to reach Goldsboro, Union forces had first to pass through Lenoir County. After the fall of New Bern in the autumn of 1862, Confederate military commanders had placed approximately two thousand troops in the Kinston area. Confederate leaders, anticipating an advance from New Bern, had established a strong line of fortifications east of Kinston. General Foster hoped to bypass this formidable line of defenses and attack Kinston in a surprise movement from the south. He hoped to crush any Confederate resistance quickly and then advance into the town of Kinston.

According to official reports filed by Major General John G. Foster, commanding the Department of North Carolina, the Union forces departed from New Bern, North Carolina, on December 11, 1862. The plan was for General Foster's attack on Goldsboro to take place simultaneously with General Ambrose Burnside's movement at Fredericksburg, Virginia. General Foster wrote: "Even if I do not succeed in my

expectations I hope my movement may be useful as a demonstration in favor of the Army of the Potomac."¹

Union forces were composed of approximately 10,000 infantry, 640 cavalry, 40 artillery pieces and their crews. This force totaled about 12,000 soldiers.² The New Bern Road to Kinston was heavily guarded by Confederate troops, especially along the Southwest Creek-Wise Fork area. Confederates impeded General Foster's progress by obstructing the roads he intended to traverse. Bridges were destroyed and trees were axed so they fell across roads, creating effective barriers.

However, to confuse the enemy, Union troops were divided into three sections. A small detachment was ordered by Foster to proceed up the main road to Kinston, this force serving as a diversion. This force was composed of three companies of cavalry commanded by a Captain Newton Hall.³ It was believed that the primary Confederate defense was stationed along this main road. Foster's main column proceeded by way of a road called the Vine Swamp Road to Kinston Road No. 3. A small contingent composed of the 46th Massachusetts, the 23rd New York, and some cavalry was detached to feint up Kinston Road No. 2.⁴ It was hoped that

¹John G. Foster to Henry W. Halleck, December 10, 1862, R. N. Scott and others (ed.), The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 70 volumes, 1880-1901), Series I, XVIII, 476-477, hereinafter cited as Official Records (Army).

²Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series, I, XVIII, 55.

³Report of Captain Newton Hall, December 22, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 71.

⁴Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

these smaller movements along the Kinston roads would act as a diversion and confuse Confederates defending the Lenoir County area. Foster's main column entered the Kinston Road No. 3 (Wilmington Road) at Sandy Foundation, a rural crossroads in Lenoir County.

Meanwhile, Captain Hall's force approached Kinston on the main road. Two troopers of a Confederate cavalry unit were captured by the Federal forces and interrogated. The prisoners revealed to their captors that a Confederate infantry unit was situated at a Mr. Becton's plantation near Wise Fork. The Union cavalry quickly advanced under Captain Hall's orders and proceeded to rout the enemy at the house. The Union cavalry killed thirteen Confederates, captured eleven prisoners, and burned the Becton house.⁵ This house-burning was the first reported loss of civilian property in Lenoir County during the Goldsboro campaign of 1862.

On December 13, Federal forces advanced along Kinston Road No. 3 until they arrived at Southwest Creek. This was the scene of the first serious Confederate resistance to the Union advance. By taking the less-used road to Kinston, Union commanders hoped to avoid Rebel resistance at the other Southwest Creek bridges. Confederate commanders had feared this very move by the Union and had detached a small force to guard the bridges crossing Southwest Creek on the other two Kinston roads.⁶ The Union force arrived at Southwest Creek along Kinston Road No. 3 around 9:00 A.M. Captain George Cole, commanding the 3rd New York

⁵Report of Captain Newton Hall, December 22, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

⁶Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 104.

Cavalry, discovered that the Confederates had damaged the bridge and established a fortified position on the opposite bank.⁷ Rebel forces were estimated at approximately four hundred strong with three artillery pieces, all behind protective breastworks. General Foster described the defensive position of the enemy: "The creek was not fordable, and ran at the foot of a deep ravine, making a very bad position for us."⁸ Union commanders decided the only way to take the bridge successfully was to outflank the defenders by crossing on each side of them.

A frontal attack had been driven back by Confederate artillery and small arms fire. Artillery was ordered into position by Union commanders and the 3rd New York Artillery "opened fire with shot with good effect."⁹ As artillery fire pinned the Rebels down, the 9th New Jersey crossed to the opposite bank, "by swimming, by fragments of the bridge and by a mill dam."¹⁰ Foster ordered the 85th Pennsylvania to cross downstream one-half mile below the enemy's entrenchments and attack their left. The 85th crossed the creek by felling trees over the water and partially wading. Almost impenetrable swamps created maneuvering problems for the Pennsylvanians, but they eventually emerged from the swamp and attacked the Confederate left flank as planned.¹¹ A spokesman

⁷W. W. Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro Expedition (New York, 1890), 11, hereinafter cited as Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro.

⁸Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

⁹Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro, 12.

¹⁰Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

¹¹Report of Colonel Joshua B. Howell, December 22, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 101-102.

for the 61st North Carolina Regiment, the primary Confederate force at the creek, described the outcome: "For some time we held our ground, but were forced to fall back by the enemy advancing upon us in overwhelming numbers. We retreated towards Kinston and halted about one mile to the rear."¹² "Retreat" would become a key descriptive phrase of the campaign, as Federal forces simply overwhelmed the opposing southern forces wherever the two met. The skirmish at Southwest Creek let General Foster know that even numerically inferior forces would not let Federal troops advance without stiff resistance.

Union troops camped along the banks of Southwest Creek the night of December 13, 1862. It was of the south bank of Southwest Creek that the historian of the 5th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers wrote, "The camp was pitched in a pleasant grove near a little church known as Woodington, though there was no other house in sight and there were not more than half a dozen within a radius of a mile."¹³ Some of the members of the 5th Regiment carved their names upon the wooden church, and the signatures were still visible twenty-six years later.¹⁴

The Union column began the approximately six-mile journey to Kinston early on Sunday, December 14. Confederate troops, well concealed in the woods, harassed the advancing Union troops constantly.

¹²Walter Clark (ed.), Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-65 (Raleigh, 1901), III, 507, hereinafter cited as Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments.

¹³Roe, The Fifth Regiment, 164.

¹⁴Roe, The Fifth Regiment, 164.

Whenever a particularly troublesome area of resistance was reached, Union artillery was brought up to bombard the sharpshooter's hiding places.¹⁵

The advance portions of Foster's troops made initial contact with the Confederates around nine o'clock in the morning. The Confederates were posted in a defensive position approximately one mile from Kinston. Foster's official report described the well-chosen Rebel position: "They were posted in strong position in the wood, taking advantage of the ground which formed a natural breastwork. Their position was secured in their right by a deep swamp, and their left was partially protected by the river."¹⁶

Confederate forces at Kinston were commanded by Brigadier General Nathan G. Evans, a well-respected leader who had gained popularity at the First Battle of Manassas. Controversy would surround General Evans's conduct at Kinston because of his heavy drinking.

The Confederate force of approximately 2,014 men had formed a defensive line that guarded the Neuse River bridge leading into Kinston. On the Kinston side of the river, a series of earthworks had been constructed 175 feet in length. Six field guns were mounted in these earthworks.¹⁷ This artillery commanded the access to the Neuse River bridge and the city of Kinston.

¹⁵Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 105.

¹⁶Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

¹⁷Report of N. G. Evans, December 20, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 113.

As Union troops neared Kinston, the townspeople experienced their first taste of warfare. Federal cannon bombarded the city from a distance of approximately two miles. The Richmond Whig reported in its December 16, 1862, issue: "Pending the engagement, the Yankees shelled the town furiously, killing several citizens. The reporter was present and witnessed it. Several homes were destroyed."¹⁸

The Confederates had situated themselves near a small, old church named Harriet's Chapel on the Wilmington Road for their center stronghold. The 61st North Carolina was stationed in and around the chapel.¹⁹

Foster dispatched Union artillery into a cleared field to the right of the Kinston Road No. 3. From this position it was hoped the Federal guns would be able to shell Confederate lines effectively. This position was approximately three-fourths of a mile behind the main line of Union attack. Troop movements became very complicated at this point.

After a quick study of the situation, General Foster decided it would be necessary to execute a flanking movement in order to crush the Confederate positions. The 85th Pennsylvania Regiment was ordered up the Kinston Road No. 3 to the left and to the right. Colonel Thomas Amory's 23rd Massachusetts Regiment was advanced up the road generally to the right.²⁰ The strategy was to use artillery as effectively as possible in the thick swamps and pine forests and then outflank the greatly outnumbered Confederate forces. The 9th New Jersey were sent up the road

¹⁸Richmond Whig, December 16, 1862.

¹⁹Clark, Histories of the North Carolina Regiments, III, 508.

²⁰Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

to act as skirmishers. The 85th Pennsylvania moved against the Confederate's right, as did the 101st Pennsylvania. The 45th Massachusetts at first had to bear the brunt of the frontal attack on the Rebel lines. A young soldier with the 45th Massachusetts recorded his view of the battle:

At about ten we left the main road and marched into a cornfield, crossing which, we entered a swampy piece of woods where there was not the least vestige of a road. The swamp became deeper as we advanced, until in many places it was up to our knees, in some cases it was waist deep. We had not gone far in this manner before we were obliged to pass under the fire of our own batteries; of course we felt perfectly safe in doing this, not supposing we should be shot by our own men, when to our unspeakable horror, the first shot from the battery carried away half the head of a man in Company D which is directly in front of our company in line.²¹

The 45th Regiment advanced till they met heavy musket fire and were ordered to "lie down." A later order of "rise up and advance" was issued and the Massachusetts Regiment moved closer towards Confederate lines.²² E. T. Hale, the young soldier who described the earlier battle scenes, gave his impressions of this phase of the action. "Up to this time we [45th Massachusetts] had bore the brunt of the battle alone, but now the one Hundred and Third Pennsylvania and the tenth Connecticut were ordered up to support us."²³ The 23rd Massachusetts moved against the Confederate right, while the 10th Connecticut made a frontal charge and broke the enemy line.

²¹Eben Thomas Hale to "Cousin Annie," December 24, 1862, Eben Thomas Hale Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as E. T. Hale Papers.

²²Eben Thomas Hale to "Cousin Annie," December 24, 1862, E. T. Hale Papers.

²³Eben Thomas Hale to "Cousin Annie," December 24, 1862, E. T. Hale Papers.

Superior Union numbers pushed the Confederates back towards the Neuse bridge. A letter from John C. Morrison, a Confederate soldier who was at the Battle of Kinston, described the action from the southern viewpoint.

We were placed behind the breastworks on the bank of the river but we were there but a few minutes when picket firing commenced which was immediately followed by heavy musketry and artillery. We were ordered to the contested field on the opposite side of the river at a double-quick for half a mile across a broad open field. At the edge of the wood through a constant shower of shell and shot we were formed in line of battle along the fence. . . . It was some time before we could see them but the messengers of death flew thick and fast cutting down a lot field pines in our midst that would make 7 or 8 rails.²⁴

Confederate and Union reports of the battle length vary, the minimum being three hours and the maximum five hours. As the Union forces began to outflank and press the outermost Confederate lines, part of the Confederates retreated across the Neuse bridge. The Confederates holding their lines to the center and right were still offering resistance to the Federals. The Neuse River bridge was mistakenly ignited and a scene of panic resulted. Prior to the battle the bridge was prepared for destruction by Confederate troops who poured turpentine upon cotton and placed the flammable material upon the bridge.²⁵ Somehow the bridge was set on fire before many of the Confederates were able to cross it. Confederate John C. Morrison described the strange scene:

Our battalion was outflanked and our batteries were silenced and a retreat ordered be retreated to neare the bridge and formed

²⁴John C. Morrison to "Deare Father," December 22, 1862, John C. Morrison Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereinafter cited as John C. Morrison Papers.

²⁵Report of Colonel Peter Mallet, February 20, 1863, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 115.

line of battle again and not till then did we see our real condition our battalion was outflanked and the enemy was at a run at our backs and on looking at the bridge it was in a flame then all hands made a rush to tak care of No. 1 The scene that soon took place on the bridge is indescribable. The rush was so grate [sic] and impeded by flames and balls of the enemy that the men fell on the bridge 3 or 5 deep so that it was impossible for those behind to advance.²⁶

Union soldiers had advanced so closely that they actually chased the Confederates across the bridge. Colonel Peter Mallet was one of the defenders placed to the extreme right of the Confederate line. Mallet's command was one of the Confederate regiments trapped by the burning bridge. Mallet reported that "the enemy pressed upon us from two directions at double quick in large force, and the bridge, the only means of escape."²⁷ Mallet lost 175 men captured at the bottleneck created by the bridge. In all about 400 Confederate prisoners were taken by the quickly advancing Union forces.

The initial Federal regiments to reach the burning bridge proceeded to extinguish the flames as quickly as possible. A bucket brigade was formed using artillery buckets to carry the water. While battling the fire, a discarded Confederate musket discharged, killing a Union colonel named Charles Gray of the 97th New York Regiment.²⁸ Some Rebel defenders had situated themselves behind the earthworks on the Kinston side of the river, but superior Union firepower soon drove these last remaining defenders away from their positions.

²⁶John C. Morrison to "Deare Father," December 22, 1862, John C. Morrison Papers.

²⁷Report of Colonel Peter Mallet, February 20, 1863, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 116.

²⁸Roe, Fifth Regiment, 169.

On December 11, 1862, a group of nine Federal boats left New Bern and proceeded up the Neuse River towards Kinston. Union military leaders hoped the gunboats would aid General Foster's attack against Kinston. Low water forced four larger naval gunboats to return to New Bern on the same day. Five smaller gunboats manned by Marine artillery continued onward up the Neuse River. At a point approximately two miles east of Kinston the Federal gunboats came under fire from an eleven-gun Confederate shore battery. One gunboat, the Allison, was heavily damaged by the heavy artillery attack. The flotilla retreated back down the Neuse River to a point of relative safety and waited the night through. Confederate shore parties harassed the Union gunboats that night but never attempted to actually board the damaged vessels. Early on the morning of December 13 the gunboats retired to their New Bern base. Several Union sailors were shot by Confederate guerrillas following the boats as they retreated down the Neuse.²⁹ Confederate defenders of Kinston and Lenoir County had efficiently placed the shore batteries and river obstructions in the Neuse River so as to prevent effective naval assistance to a land invasion.

Confederate soldiers retreated through the streets of Kinston, reforming a new line north of town. General Foster sent his staff officer with a surrender message to General Evans, who had established temporary headquarters north of Kinston.³⁰ Evans refused to surrender, so Union artillery began an immediate barrage upon the Confederate

²⁹Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro, 71-75.

³⁰Report of General N. G. Evans, December 20, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 113.

forces. Some reports describe the artillery barrage as being low. A Confederate soldier reported that it was "so low that some of the shells swept very closely over our heads."³¹

Several buildings were damaged by the brief Union artillery barrage. A print shop, located on Queen Street and owned by Walter Dunn was damaged somewhat by cannon fire. One shell passed through Dunn's print shop and struck the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad station nearby. Another shell hit in the Kinston Cemetary, damaging a brick wall. But the bombardment apparently caused no loss of human life.³² Later as Union troops entered Kinston, one soldier reported: "looking around the town we found every evidence of our large and small shot having taken effect."³³

General Evans sent a messenger under the flag of truce to ask if a cease-fire could be called to allow the women and children of Kinston to seek shelter. As this was agreed upon, the Union soldiers sought to help the civilians of the beleaguered town. While Union troops were preoccupied with the evacuation procedures, General Evans and his forces made an effective escape from the Kinston area.

As Federal troops entered Kinston, at a point approximately one-half mile from the bridge, the first things observed were damages caused by the retreating Confederates. General Foster reported: "Occupying the town of Kinston recently, the streets were found in many cases full

³¹Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro, 20.

³²Carolina and the Southern Cross, 1.

³³Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro, 10.

of burning cotton, naval stores, etc."³⁴ As the Union troops entered the town they found large amounts of weapons and ammunition abandoned along the streets. It appeared the Confederates had simply thrown down their guns and provisions as they fled. The Confederates also left eleven pieces of artillery on the field to be confiscated by advancing Federals.³⁵ The historian of the 45th Massachusetts estimated that approximately eighty to ninety bales of cotton were destroyed. Much of the cotton that was burnt was the property of a Scot named Alexander Nichols.³⁶

The retreating Confederates also attempted to destroy a locomotive and some railroad cars. Fires had been started in attempts to destroy caches of arms and ammunition, but these were easily extinguished by Union soldiers. Occupation forces captured 1,000 rounds of heavy ammunition, 500 stands of arms, 12 gun carriages, and a large quantity of commissary and quartermaster supplies.³⁷ General Foster's report mentioned that a house was damaged by fire and that it was saved only by the quick action of Union soldiers. Foster blamed the fire on nearby burning cotton, grain, and other supplies in the streets of Kinston. These supplies had been lit by retreating Confederates.³⁸

³⁴Report of John G. Foster, December 29, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 55.

³⁵Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 109.

³⁶Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 109.

³⁷Howe, Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro, 19.

³⁸J. G. Foster to J. G. French, December 20, 1862, Official Records (Army), Series I, XVIII, 495.

Various impressions were recorded by Federal soldiers who entered Kinston. Descriptions of the town vary greatly even among soldiers of the same regiment. The 24th Massachusetts regiment historian described the town as "a rather pretty place with good buildings. . . ." ³⁹ Another observer reported that "Kinston seemed to me to be a place of more thrift and business, and had a more Yankee-look than any place I have seen in the state." ⁴⁰ But another description sounded quite different: "In the little dilapidated city of Kinston, desolation and starvation reigned." ⁴¹

Many of the citizens of Kinston, fearing for their lives, had left the town before the battle commenced. The people who remained in the town were described in various ways by the Union troops. It was apparent that the people of Kinston may have feared the Confederate soldiers more than the Federals. All males who were old enough to carry a gun had been carried off by the Confederate army. The only men found in Kinston were three "Union" men who had hidden in order to avoid forced conscription into the Confederate army. The townspeople were described as passive and seeking aid from the Union troops. Some of the civilians apparently wandered over to the Union soldiers and begged for handouts of any kind. ⁴² People who had evacuated Kinston before the

³⁹ Alfred S. Roe, The Twenty-Fourth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers 1861-1866 (Worcester, Mass., 1907), 170, hereinafter cited as Roe, Twenty-Fourth Regiment.

⁴⁰ Roe, Fifth Regiment, 165.

⁴¹ Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 108.

⁴² Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 108.

battle began filtering back into the community carrying white flags, hoping to guard their belongings and property.

Perhaps the best description of the events that took place on that Sunday afternoon in December, 1862, were recorded by Mrs. Mary Ellen Miller in a letter to her brother in Boston, Massachusetts. Mrs. Miller's husband was a physician in Kinston at the time. The following excerpts are from the several-page letter written on the day after the battle and Union occupation.

The house was shaken to the foundation by artillery, and the musketry rattled like corn in a "popper." About 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ the shout went up that our forces were retreating, and soon they came pouring through the town.⁴³

The main thing that Mrs. Miller feared was hand-to-hand combat in the streets of Kinston. Such bloody combat was avoided because the Confederates did not turn and fight until reaching a hill on the north side of town.

Mrs. Miller was a northern woman by birth who knew some of the Union officers in command at Kinston. One officer she was acquainted with was Lieutenant Gregg of New York, who posted a guard at the Miller household to protect their property. The main problems discussed by Mrs. Miller all resulted from the misconduct of Union soldiers. According to Mrs. Miller, Federal soldiers were adept at pillage of personal property belonging to southerners. Soldiers at one house took "every article of bed clothing, knives and forks, sugar, honey, preserves, table cloths--in fact everything."⁴⁴ When one Union soldier

⁴³"Letter of Mrs. Mary Ellen Miller," North Carolina Historical Review, V (October, 1928), 454, hereinafter cited as "Letter of Mrs. Miller."

⁴⁴"Letter of Mrs. Miller," 455.

attempted to carry off Mrs. Miller's property, she heard the silverware rattling in one soldier's pockets and somehow made him give the loot back to her. Several Union officers came by and cleaned up and ate supper with the Millers that night.

Some of the Union troops camped along the railroad tracks which were located just beyond the northern limits of the town. The officers of the 45th Massachusetts Regiment decided they wanted a bath and a good meal, so they decided to pay a visit to the Kinston jailor. The officers bathed with well water in the jailor's front yard and then asked him to prepare them some food. The Yankees paid the jailor for his troubles with greenbacks, and so he would not be accused of aiding the enemy, one of the group made a token effort at ransacking the man's storehouse. A provost marshall issued orders for Kinston to be under constant guard the night of initial Federal occupation. This guard duty was to prevent looting and destruction in the town. Fires had been started in several places throughout Kinston earlier in the evening. A cotton warehouse had been damaged by fire before Union troops could extinguish the flames.⁴⁵ Many of the earlier guards on provost duty had gotten drunk on homemade wine and applejack (apple brandy). Many of the wounded Federals were transported to Kinston and housed in an uncompleted church in the edge of town. The Methodist-Episcopal church on the corner of Caswell and Independence Street was the structure used as a temporary hospital. It was under construction when commandeered by Union troops for use as a hospital.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Mann, Forty-Fifth Regiment, 276.

⁴⁶"1899 Industrial Issue of the Kinston Daily Free Press," Kinston Daily Free Press (1899), 40.

All remained fairly quiet the evening of the fourteenth, except for the usual drunken, carousing soldiers and some occasional plundering. The town had some entertainment that night as the 45th Massachusetts Regiment had a cadet band, which had been acting as a stretcher and medical corps. The band instruments had been looked after by the quartermaster and that evening the band retrieved its instruments. The colonel of the 45th requested a performance, so later in the evening Foster's troops enjoyed a concert.

The night of the fourteenth, a fire broke out in Kinston destroying several buildings, including a drugstore. After this late night disturbance, the town appeared to have rested quietly until the next morning. The damage caused by the Union occupants appeared to have been minimal except for stealing. Thievery apparently was random and objects taken varied greatly.

While encamped at Kinston, General Foster learned of the Union defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia. This victory by Confederate forces would likely mean that General Robert E. Lee would be able to release troops for duty in eastern North Carolina. Foster decided to continue his advance upon Goldsboro.⁴⁷

Early on the morning of the fifteenth, Foster proceeded to march his troops out of Kinston towards Goldsboro. The Union troops moved across the Neuse bridge they had saved from flames the previous day and then proceeded to destroy the structure. Union troops at this point

⁴⁷John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963), 144, hereinafter cited as Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina.

completely left the town of Kinston and proceeded along the "river road" towards Goldsboro.

Foster's troops reached rail lines near Goldsboro on December 17. After burning the important railroad bridge across the Neuse River and raiding several local depots, Union forces began a retreat toward New Bern.

On the return march to New Bern, Foster again led his troops through Lenoir County following the same route that they had entered. Rations were short and Union soldiers were forced to forage for needed food and supplies. One Union soldier with the 5th Massachusetts Regiment wrote: "In our need, we must have left many a household with nothing of their winters' supply of bacon and sweet potatoes."⁴⁸ Other soldiers reported that cattle were slaughtered and eaten by the needy troops. Bushels of sweet potatoes and corn and a few turnips were used to fill the empty stomachs of the Union troops.

The soldiers needed fires for cooking so trees were cut and fences were torn down for firewood. One officer remarked: "that probably there was not left alive a chicken nor an unburned fence-rail between New Bern and Goldsboro."⁴⁹

Regular army rations were received several miles east of Kinston from supply boats on the Neuse River. These boats left food and picked up wounded Union soldiers east of the Confederate built river obstructions.

⁴⁸Roe, Fifth Regiment, 183-184.

⁴⁹Roe, Fifth Regiment, 184-185.

Union troops, by accident or on purpose, started several forest fires in the immense pine woods between New Bern and Kinston. Huge amounts of woodland and undoubtedly farm property were destroyed.⁵⁰

By late December all of General Foster's forces had returned to base at New Bern. The success of the raids in disrupting the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad was minimal. Perhaps the greatest success was the destruction of private property and the disruption of life in the Lenoir County area. The Civil War had touched the lives of many Lenoir County residents. This raid was their first real experience with war, but it was only the beginning.

⁵⁰Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 148.

CHAPTER IV

LOYALTY AND LIBERTIES IN LENOIR COUNTY:

1861-1865

Not all the people of Lenoir County were loyal Confederates nor were they all pro-Unionists. If the Civil War caused undue stress or hardships, feelings would tend to develop into anti-war sentiment. Yet if the war retained the romantic notion of a fight for freedom or showed promise of economic betterment, individuals would support the secession effort. But Unionist sympathies undoubtedly existed among the populace of Lenoir County throughout the war years.

Besides suffering inflation, battle casualties, and social hardships, Lenoir County twice served as a battleground for major military conflicts. The people of Lenoir lived in a front-line area throughout much of the war. They were frequently subjected to cavalry raids from New Bern and also had to endure the hardships of supporting massive numbers of Confederate troops in their midst. These conditions molded the attitudes and sentiments of the people of the county towards the war.

The earliest reports of war sentiments in the county date from 1862. In December, 1862, Union forces under General John G. Foster reported that initial contacts with the people of Lenoir County revealed they were already tired of the war. The historian of the 45th Massachusetts Regiment wrote of the residents, "They [women] were generally anxious for the war to end on any terms, asserting that they were

living under a reign of terror, and that they had more to fear from the rebel than the Union troops."¹ Union soldiers constantly wrote about the poor conditions of the houses in the county. They described startling and frequent incidents of Confederate thievery and oppression. These occupation forces reported they saw stripped-down houses and other signs of widespread looting in the area.

A chaplain from a New York regiment recorded a strange case of Unionist feelings in the Kinston area during this 1862 operation. The story involved the chaplain being escorted by a contingent of Confederate soldiers through a recent battlefield near Kinston. The chaplain was checking on Union casualties from the battle of December 14. The group stopped for a brief rest at the home of a local planter. As they neared the planter's house, they were met by the owner who said, "Glad to see you, even though you bring a cussed Yankee with you. Come in, all of you." At this point, the planter offered the men some applejack to refresh them. All accepted the applejack except the Union chaplain, who said to the planter, "I don't care for any applejack; but I would like a drink of water, if you'll be kind enough to give it to me." The planter escorted the chaplain to the back of the house and gave him some water. He suddenly told the Union chaplain, "I've got to cuss you while these fellows are 'round; but I'm with you heart and soul. I'm a Union man through and through." Later that night the planter found time to tell the chaplain about terrible conditions in the county. The planter described strong Unionist feelings among both civilian and military people in the area.²

¹Mann, Forty-Fifth Massachusetts, 108.

²Trumbell, War Memoirs of an Army Chaplain, 248.

The planter stated that immediately after Foster's advance into eastern North Carolina there had been numerous arrests and imprisonments of supposed Yankee sympathizers. According to the planter, the Confederate army was the only thing which kept Unionist feelings from surfacing in a more vocal manner in Lenoir County. He even accused the Confederates of using the prison at Salisbury, North Carolina, to detain Unionists in North Carolina. The planter concluded his story to the chaplain by stating, "We're worse off than the nigger slaves."³ According to this source, the people of Lenoir County were suffering badly by late 1862. The citizens were not pleased with the Confederate government and were constantly persecuted by southern military forces.

Numerous Lenoir County residents were arrested and subsequently imprisoned by Confederate military leaders. One of Kinston's leading citizens, John H. Dibble, a merchant and manufacturer, was imprisoned for approximately six months. Dibble was never formally accused of any crime. The man was told he had been incarcerated because he was a "northern man," having been born in the North.⁴ Another Kinston resident jailed by Confederate military authorities was Aaron Baer. Baer, a local merchant, was accused of harboring Union sympathizers. Mr. Baer's questionable loyalty cost him time in the Kinston jail. The old Kinston jail was seized early in the war by the Confederate army and was often used to detain civilian prisoners. These two men, Dibble and Baer, both leading citizens of Kinston, were harshly treated by the

³Trumbell, War Memoirs of an Army Chaplain, 248.

⁴"Murder of Union Soldiers in North Carolina," House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 21, hereinafter cited as House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session.

Confederate authorities stationed in Lenoir County. Undoubtedly, others of lesser social standing and wealth were also harassed by Confederate military leaders during the war years.⁵

Regardless of reports of repression and harassment of civil liberties, many county residents remained steadfastly loyal to the Confederate doctrine. A letter written in late 1862 tells this story well: "Our [illegible] say he would rather burn it [Kinston] than to have it fall into the hands of the Yankees--may God forgive him. . . . If our town is destroyed, I think it will be done by our own people."⁶ The Union troops entering Kinston after defeating Confederate forces defending the city found two types of people in Kinston: the stubborn Confederates and the passive neutralists. The Union soldiers saw evidence of the strong Confederate sentiment when upon entering the town they were greeted with a large sign stating, "U Gill will fight the Yankees 1,000 years."⁷ The Federal troops never discovered the identity of "U Gill." A Confederate soldier stationed near Kinston reflected the loyalty to the Confederacy when he wrote: "Nearly all the 'Riffs' have left here. I am glad of it. They are too Yankeeish."⁸

One of the most controversial events of the Civil War occurred in Kinston during the early months of 1864. The chain of events began in

⁵House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 24.

⁶M. A. H. to "My Dear Lorna," December 31, 1862, Dr. Leroy Chappell Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁷Roe, Twenty-Fourth Regiment, 170.

⁸_____ to Charlotte, May 24, 1863, May 24, 1863, Edward D. Walsh Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

February, 1864, as Confederate General George E. Pickett led a force of approximately thirteen thousand men against the Union stronghold of New Bern. Although the operation was unsuccessful, a substantial number of Union soldiers were captured. Immediately following their capture, these prisoners were transported to Confederate headquarters at Kinston. Approximately twenty of these prisoners were recognized as native North Carolinians and were immediately segregated from the other prisoners and incarcerated in the Kinston jail. These men were members of the 1st and 2nd North Carolina Union Volunteers. This was a regiment of North Carolinians who had joined the Federal army at New Bern.

As local people and Confederate soldiers observed these special prisoners, it was determined that many of the men were from the Lenoir County area. Investigation by Confederate officers indicated that not only were the twenty-three men North Carolina citizens, but they were Confederate army deserters. A military court-martial was convened by General Pickett, who was commander of Confederate forces at Kinston. Members of the court-martial were largely from Virginia companies stationed in the Kinston area.⁹

While awaiting trial the prisoners were treated poorly. Local residents stated that the men were barely fed. Mrs. Celia Brock, wife of one of the men, reported that her husband was fed only one cracker per day while interned in the Kinston jail. Other local people reported: "They [prisoners] were rescued from starvation only by friends supplying them with food."¹⁰

⁹House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 20.

¹⁰House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 16.

The legal question arose as to whether these North Carolinians were Confederate army deserters. The majority of the men had belonged to local North Carolina units called service companies. Apparently the men had joined the local units so as to avoid leaving their homes. They had been led to believe that if they joined state units, they could continue living at their homes. Many regular Confederate soldiers could not sympathize with the captured North Carolinians. It was widely believed that these local units were of little use and that "men volunteered therein for the purpose of being out of danger, avoiding conscription and remaining near their homes."¹¹

Apparently sometime in 1863, these men of the local service companies in eastern North Carolina were ordered by the Confederate government to join the regular Confederate army, being assigned to the 66th North Carolina Regiment. Many of the members of the local service units were extremely unhappy with these orders and never reported for duty with the regular Confederate army.¹² Between the time of this order to appear for muster with the 66th North Carolina Regiment and February 1, 1864, several of the local service unit members filtered down to New Bern and enlisted in the United States Army. Mrs. Nancy Jones, wife of prisoner William Jones, testified that her husband had only recently joined the Federal army, enlisting in January, 1864.¹³

The Confederate court-martial convened in early February, 1864. The first trial involved only two men, Joseph Haskett and David Jones,

¹¹House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 57.

¹²House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 23.

¹³House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 20.

both of Craven County. This trial set a precedent for the following courts-martial by not allowing the accused men any counsel or witnesses. The court reached a quick verdict of guilty and ordered the men hanged the next day for desertion from the Confederate army. A Confederate chaplain, Reverend John Parris of the 54th North Carolina Regiment, attended the doomed men. Parris wrote, "They were illiterate men. They admitted desertion yet claimed the Yankees forced them to enlist in the Union Army."¹⁴ Haskett and Jones were hanged on February 5, 1864, in a field outside Kinston.

Apparently thirteen more North Carolinians were hanged on February 15, 1864. Their trial had been held the previous day and like the first court-martial, these men were also denied counsel. Reverend Parris attended these convicted men while they awaited their execution. According to Parris, two of the men made last minute confessions. One of the condemned men, Mitchell Busick, stated: "I went to New Bern and they [Yankees] told me if I did not go into their service I would be taken through their lines and shot." Another prisoner, Amos Armyett, remarked: "I did wrong in volunteering after I got to New Bern." Seven more men were hanged in early March, 1864, bringing the total executed to twenty-two.¹⁵

¹⁴House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 13.

¹⁵House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 13, 15, 1, 2. Several lists of the condemned men exist today, but discrepancies in the spelling of names and listing of residences abound. A list of the twenty-two hanged men and their residences is as follows: Joseph Haskett and David Jones, Craven County; Amos Armyett, William Irving, Mitchell Busick, Lewis Bryan, John Stanley, Jones County; John Brock, Jessie Summerlin, William Jones, Stephen Jones, Lenoir County; William Haddock, Andrew Brittain, Lewis Freeman, Calvin Hoffman, Lewis Taylor, Charles Cuthrell, William Doughtry, John Freeman, Elijah Kellum,

The court-martial was considered by many witnesses to be a complete farce. The testimony of J. H. Nethercutt, a service company officer, seemed to indicate that these unfortunate men were not regular Confederate soldiers. This testimony was apparently not used in the prisoners' favor. Of the accused men, only one was allowed any witnesses. Clinton Cox was saved from a death sentence by Captain G. W. Cox, who may have been a relative. Captain Cox testified that Clinton Cox was a member of a North Carolina local unit and that he had never actually been a regular Confederate soldier.¹⁶

Several local residents attempted to aid the men who were on trial. Lenoir County Sheriff William Fields, knew several of the men and he thought of helping them. However, Fields feared General Robert F. Hoke and possible retributions for attempts to aid the alleged deserters. Bryan McCullum of Kinston stated that the "court-martial refused to admit an attorney, or to receive any evidence in favor of the accused."¹⁷ Accordingly, all the men tried, except Clinton Cox, were found guilty of desertion and were ordered to be hanged within twenty-four hours of their trials. The condemned men were allowed visitors during that short period before their sentences were carried out. Wives, sisters and mothers visited these hapless men in their last hours.¹⁸

William Hill, Joseph Block (Brock?) were probably from Lenoir County also.

¹⁶House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 12, 13, 14.

¹⁷House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 15.

¹⁸House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 14.

The executions were carried out under the watchful eye of Confederate General Robert F. Hoke. Several volunteer hangmen stepped forward to conduct the hangings. Blunt King, a man from Goldsboro, hanged several of the convicted deserters. A second hangman, who remains unidentified, was described by numerous witnesses as a "tall, dark complexioned man, with a squint or cross eye." Many people thought this hangman was from Raleigh.¹⁹ Aaron Baer, a local merchant, testified that this hangman appeared at his business and bragged that he had been well paid for his efforts "by the clothes of the hanged men." This executioner said he would do anything for money.²⁰

Witnesses offered different versions as to the exact procedure of the hangings. Catherine Summerlin stated the men were all hanged from "one pole of beam" in a field outside Kinston. The rope for the gallows was secured from the Confederate river ironclad Neuse which was moored near Kinston.²¹ Several Confederate soldiers stationed in the Kinston area mentioned the executions in their letters home. Leonidas Polk wrote his wife on February 13, 1864: "They are erecting additional gallows today upon which will suspend 13 more of these criminals on Monday."²² Another soldier wrote, "There were 5 men hung last Friday and 13 hung today [February 15, 1864]."²³

¹⁹House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 17.

²⁰House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 24.

²¹House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 22.

²²Leonidas Polk to "Dear Wife," February 13, 1864, Polk Papers.

²³Jerome Riggins to Martin Moser, February 15, 1864, Martin Moser Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

It was not the actual hangings so much as the mistreatment of the bodies that aroused local people's ire. Many atrocities occurred after the bodies were removed from the gallows. Some of the men were "stripped of clothing almost or quite to a state of nudity." Some bodies were left for relatives to retrieve while others were merely dumped in common graves near the gallows. A portion of the bodies were even "delivered to experimenting surgery."²⁴

Lenoir County Sheriff William Fields delivered the body of Jessie Summerlin, a former friend, to his widow. The body had been stripped except for pants. Mrs. Nancy Jones, widow of William Jones, testified that after the hanging, her husband's body disappeared. Her son and nephew eventually located the body in the attic of a Kinston home. The dead man's body was under guard and a week after the man had been executed, a doctor finally gave permission to the boys to remove the deceased.²⁵ Clinton Cox, though not sentenced to be hung, died after an unspecified term in the Kinston jail.²⁶

Union commanders in New Bern learned of the hangings by mid February, 1864. Major General John Peck, commander of Federal forces at New Bern, wrote Confederate General George E. Pickett on February 27, 1864, concerning the executions:

These men in common with half the population of the state were ever loyal to the United States and opposed secession until put down by arbitrary power. . . . With tens of thousands they

²⁴House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 16.

²⁵House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 20.

²⁶House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 25.

seized the first opportunity to rush within my lines and assume their former allegiance.²⁷

Confederate General George Pickett responded to General Peck's letter by saying that the North Carolinians had been dealt with in a proper military manner. Pickett also claimed that many of the executed men "pleaded in extenuation that they had been forced into the ranks of the Federal Government."²⁸

Persecution of the executed men's families began almost immediately after the hangings. A Colonel Baker allegedly robbed and harassed the families of the dead men. Catherine Summerlin was "visited" by Colonel Baker several days after her husband's death. Mrs. Summerlin's house and property were plundered and her only horse was taken. The widow was left "with five children in desperate circumstances."²⁹

There was a strong reaction among many of the citizens of the state against these executions. John B. Nethery, the Assistant Adjutant-General in the Office of the Adjutant-General of North Carolina commented: "The people expressed great regret at the execution, feeling that it was for small offense."³⁰ Leonidas Polk wrote, "I am not fond

²⁷House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 6,
7.

²⁸House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 5.

²⁹House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 17,
18.

³⁰Rush C. Hawkins, An Account of the Assassination of Loyal Citizens in N.C. for Having Served in the Union Army which took Place at Kinston in N.C. in the months of February and March, 1864 (New York, 1897), 25, hereinafter cited as Hawkins, Assassination of Loyal Citizens; House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 61.

of seeing the execution of fellow men, deserving [as] they may be of this awful penalty."³¹

These twenty-two hangings were not the end of such happenings in wartime Kinston. One witness claimed that there were over seventy hangings in Kinston during the war years. "They [hangings] began and increased," he wrote, "until they got to be frightful."³² At least two blacks were executed by firing squads during this period of terror, probably being shot as spies.³³

A postwar Federal Investigative Board reasoned that "the object of this disgraceful sacrifice of human life, perpetrated on the part of the leaders, was to terrify the loyal people of North Carolina."³⁴

These hangings prompted controversy throughout the state of North Carolina and the United States. Northern newspapers carried accounts of the executions and Federal military leaders debated the right to execute prisoners of war. General Benjamin F. Butler, commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, wrote Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant concerning the hangings.

I do not recognize any right in the rebels to execute a Union soldier, because either by force or fraud, or by voluntary enlistment even he has once brought into their ranks, and has escaped therefrom.³⁵

³¹Leonidas Polk to "Dear Wife," February 13, 1864, Polk Papers.

³²Hawkins, Assassination of Loyal Citizens, 23.

³³House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 22.

³⁴House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 17.

³⁵House Executive Documents No. 98, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 3.

Postwar investigations held in 1865 and 1866 heard hours of testimony from eyewitnesses and local residents. An abundance of evidence was gathered, but no serious attempts were made to prosecute former Confederate Generals Pickett and Hoke, who had presided over the executions. The year 1864 was a time of war when laws and morals were stretched and warped, and atrocities and death occurred daily. The 1864 hangings in Kinston are still clouded in controversy and ambiguity.

Few records exist today that document war sentiments in Lenoir County during the latter months of the war. Federal military records reported a pro-Unionist event in March, 1865. As Union troops under General John M. Schofield's command invaded Lenoir County, they commented on a strong Union sentiment in the Kinston area. The most blatant instance of Union sympathy occurred on March 8, 1865, the first day of the second battle of Kinston when Colonel Charles Upham led two regiments towards Kinston along the New Bern road. Suddenly an old man, a civilian, rode up and addressed the Union colonel. The civilian informed the colonel that the Union troops were being outflanked and could soon expect an attack by Confederate forces. The old man made a quick exit and within minutes a stiff Confederate fire opened against the advance Union forces under Colonel Upham. The identity of the Unionist informer is not known, but his advice to the Federal forces gave them at least a few minutes to prepare for an imminent attack. At least part of the surprise of the Confederate attack was removed by the warning. Within days Kinston was occupied by Federal forces. The Civil War was over for Kinston and Lenoir County.³⁶

³⁶J. D. Cox, March to the Sea (New York, 1890), 158, hereinafter cited as Cox, March to the Sea; W. P. Derby, Bearing Arms in the Twenty-Seventh Massachusetts Regiment (Boston, 1883), 463-464, hereinafter cited as Derby, Bearing Arms.

Perhaps the most haunting testimony concerning Unionists in Lenoir County deals with the trials and executions of those Yankee soldiers in 1864. Postwar investigations by the Federal government turned up many examples of harassment, censorship, and imprisonment within eastern North Carolina. Undoubtedly these war years were extremely repressive. For those who were open dissidents in the South, that is rebels against the rebellion itself, times were hard. Unionists found that their freedoms and even their lives were in constant danger from Confederate military authorities.

There is clear evidence that pro-Unionist feelings could be found in Lenoir County beside hardline secessionists. Local conditions caused a flip-flopping of sympathies among the county residents. As the war neared its end, the people were largely ready for it to cease as quickly as possible. Ideally the war was being fought to preserve liberties. But ironically by the mid-war years individual liberties had been largely lost due to Confederate repression. There was a thin line between anti-Confederate and pro-Unionist philosophies.

CHAPTER V
THE SECOND BATTLE OF KINSTON AND
THE OCCUPATION OF KINSTON:
MARCH, 1865

Lenoir County was the scene of a second battle in March, 1865. This engagement had several similarities to the one that occurred in 1862. In both campaigns troops left New Bern with Goldsboro as their objective. However, the 1862 campaign sought to disrupt the rail lines while the 1865 movement aimed to repair them. Union troops under the command of General Jacob D. Cox had been ordered to follow the railroad from New Bern to Goldsboro, to guard railroad repair crews and to secure the line as a supply route for Major General William T. Sherman.

Union troops in this 1865 repair-and-supply campaign were required to follow the railroad from New Bern to Goldsboro. Unlike the troops under General John Foster in 1862, these soldiers could not perform elaborate flank marches in order to avoid primary Confederate defenses located along the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. Thus, as General Cox and his men advanced, they marched directly towards the major Confederate positions in eastern Lenoir County. A battle between Confederate and Union forces was inevitable.

By early March General Cox pushed two Union divisions towards Kinston. These two divisions were under the immediate command of Brigadier General Innis Palmer and Brigadier General S. G. Carter. Initial Union advances along the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad

were rapid as virtually no Confederate resistance was offered. The railroad between Kinston and New Bern had been out of use since 1862. Confederates later removed several miles of rails from the tracks, these rails being converted to iron plating for use on Confederate ironclads.¹

Confederates anticipated the Union advance and prepared to meet the enemy force. Robert E. Lee mentioned the Federal movement to Joseph E. Johnston in a dispatch dated February 23, 1865. By March 6, Confederate General Braxton Bragg telegraphed Joseph E. Johnston: "The enemy's advance was this morning nine miles from Kinston. They are in sufficient force and moving in confidence. . . ."² General Bragg convinced General Johnston of the importance of stopping or at least delaying this Union advance towards Goldsboro. As a result, all available Confederate soldiers in the Lenoir County vicinity were rushed to halt the approaching Federal troops. By early March, Confederate forces in the Kinston area had been boosted to a strength of eight to ten thousand men.³

Union General Jacob D. Cox was now commanding approximately thirteen thousand men. These forces continued their steady advance up the railroad towards Kinston, staying miles ahead of the railroad repair crews. Railroad materials received top priority and inadequate military supplies continued to be a nagging problem for the Union troops. A

¹Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 285; Charles L. Price, "The United States Military Railroads in North Carolina, 1862-1865," North Carolina Historical Review, LII (July, 1976), 244.

²Braxton Bragg to General Joseph E. Johnston, March 6, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1334-35.

³Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 286-7.

telegram from General Cox to General John Schofield, commander of the Department of North Carolina, succinctly stated the basic problem: "We are having the greatest difficulty in getting up supplies and ammunition."⁴ Within days, the Union advance towards Kinston had slowed. The railroad tracks between New Bern and Kinston passed through a virtual wilderness of woods and swamps, with only a few decent roads traversing this swampy wasteland. Torrential spring rains began falling shortly after the Union divisions embarked on their campaign to Kinston. These heavy rains converted the primitive roads into virtual quagmires. Wagons carrying supplies found it exceedingly difficult to travel on these flooded roads.

Another problem with the railroad supplies soon arose. Rail construction was slowed by a shortage of necessary supplies. General Cox had been ordered to protect the railroad repair crews that were working on the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. As construction slowed, Cox decided to push his soldiers westward ahead of the railroad repair crews. By March 7, Union troops had extended their front line approximately seven miles beyond the farthest railroad repairs. Railroad repairs continued to be hampered by bad weather and supply shortages, but Union military leaders decided to push onward towards Kinston. Trains carried supplies to the furthest point of railroad repair. There the cargo was loaded onto wagons and transported seven miles to the Union front lines. As the weather worsened so did the condition of the wagon roads.⁵

⁴J. D. Cox to Major General John M. Schofield, March 9, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 747.

⁵Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 286; Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, passim.

Confederate leaders, aware of the Union advance, decided to utilize old defensive positions originally established east of Kinston in 1862. These formidable earthworks were parallel to an old road known locally as the British Road. Other Confederate trenches ran along the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad tracks. Southwest Creek, a stream approximately twenty-five to thirty feet in width, was an integral part of the Confederate defenses east of Kinston as all roads leading westward into Kinston crossed this small body of water. Huge earthworks were constructed along the banks of this deep stream. These defenses had been manned in 1862, but Union General John G. Foster bypassed them and attacked Kinston from the south. However, in 1865 Union forces had to parallel the railroad in order to protect railroad repair crews, thus they were bound to run directly into these potent defensive positions.

By March 7, 1865, the Union troops were closing in on the Confederate earthworks. It was apparent that a confrontation would likely occur in the eastern part of Lenoir County, near an intersection of roads called Wise Fork. The Wise Fork area was described by a Union soldier in March, 1865: "The grounds were mostly a dead level, covered with partially reclaimed swamps, or thickets of woods and marsh, while the roads were mud holes of uncertain depths."⁶ The Confederate commander in Kinston, General Braxton Bragg, hurried all available troops and equipment to this area.

Several roads crisscrossed the eastern part of Lenoir County at this time. The roads which were of paramount importance to the campaign of 1865 were the Neuse Road, British Road, Dover Road, and the Upper

⁶Derby, Bearing Arms, 460.

Trent Road. The Neuse Road roughly paralleled the Neuse River and ran along its south bank. The Dover Road ran east off the Neuse Road and headed towards the hamlet of Dover in Craven County. British Road ran parallel to the Neuse Road and was approximately one mile east of the Neuse Road. The Upper Trent Road left the Dover Road at Wise Fork and headed southeast to Trenton, a small village in Jones County. Union troops were advancing parallel to the tracks of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, making use of several local roads, particularly the Dover Road.

As Federal forces neared the Wise Fork area, General Cox decided to divide his troops and place them in defensive positions. General Innis Palmer's division was placed along the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad track forming the right side of the Union line. Brigadier General S. G. Carter's division was ordered to assume a position along the Union left and protect the Dover Road.⁷ Another division under the command of Major General Thomas Ruger was stationed several miles to the rear. Ruger's division was located in this position as a reserve that could be easily advanced to the front lines in case of attack by Confederates, who were believed to be located along the west bank of Southwest Creek. A Union brigade under the command of Colonel Charles Upham moved one mile ahead of primary Federal positions. Upham's position was along the British Road where it intersected the Dover Road. The two regiments under the command of Colonel Upham were the 15th Connecticut and the 27th Massachusetts.⁸

⁷J. D. Cox, March to the Sea (New York: 1890), 156, hereinafter cited as Cox, March to the Sea.

⁸Cox, March to the Sea, 156.

Upon learning of the advancing Union brigade, General Braxton Bragg decided to outflank and overrun the Federal positions. On March 8, 1865, Confederate General Robert F. Hoke was ordered to move out from Southwest Creek and begin flanking Colonel Upham's brigade. From a civilian informer, Upham received warning several minutes before the attack. Within minutes of the forewarning, Union troops found they were both outflanked and outnumbered by Hoke's Confederates.⁹ The Federal troops, many of them new recruits, were driven back from their original position. Initially, good Union leadership encouraged the shaken soldiers to maintain order and continue firing as they regrouped and prepared for retreat. But suddenly Confederates almost completely encircled the distraught Union troops. Many of the Federal soldiers panicked and began to run in complete disarray. Bedlam resulted. Thus, Colonel Upham's brigade suffered terrible losses on the morning of March 8, 1865. The Confederates captured 6 officers and 940 enlisted men. The first day of battle had gone to the Confederates.¹⁰

Upon learning of this initial setback, General Cox ordered up Major General Thomas Ruger's reserve forces from their Gum Swamp position. Ruger's men joined the main defensive line and filled the gap between Palmer's and Carter's divisions. These three divisions formed a strong north-south defensive line. Confederate forces pushed on towards the British Road and halted there.

On this first day of battle, Confederate troops managed to reach the Federal supply lines. These wagons, which ran from the railroad

⁹Derby, Bearing Arms, 463-464.

¹⁰Derby, Bearing Arms, 465.

terminus to the Union front, were highly vulnerable to attack. General Cox dispatched Union soldiers to aid the stricken supply trains and expedite the transportation of provisions to the front.

The evening of March 8, Union troops constructed formidable lines of defense to protect themselves from frontal attack. The Pioneer Corps led the way by cutting down trees in all directions. The trees were not cut clear from the stump, so that when they fell an effective barrier was created. Earthworks were constructed next, these being piles of dirt about three feet high. Many of the Union soldiers had no shovels, so the breastworks were largely built with tin plates. Union commanders decided to fight a defensive campaign from behind their fortifications.¹¹ Hopefully, Federal reinforcements were on the way from the Wilmington area and would soon come to the aid of Cox's beleaguered troops.¹²

Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston telegraphed Zebulon Vance, Governor of North Carolina, concerning Bragg's victory of March 8:

General Bragg reports that he attacked the enemy four miles from Kinston yesterday; drove them back three miles, taking several hundred prisoners and killing and wounding a large number. Our own loss comparatively small. Colonel Sale, at Kinston, reports this morning 1,000 prisoners arrived and 500 coming.¹³

All was quiet on March 9, 1865. Both sides spent the day observing each other and occasionally firing a shell or two. General Braxton

¹¹Diary of Charles Tournier, March 8, 1865.

¹²Major General John M. Schofield to Major General D. N. Couch, Commander Second and Third Divisions, Twenty-third Army Corps, March 9, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 751.

¹³Joseph E. Johnston to Zebulon B. Vance, March 9, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1354.

Bragg meanwhile planned an attack for the next day. Bragg was confident that the Federals could be beaten and pushed back from their trenches. Union leaders anticipated an attack on their far left flank and strengthened the fortifications and manpower in that area. The Federal troops waited throughout the night for the inevitable Confederate attack.

The Union generals were correct in their assumptions as to where the Confederate attack would come. At approximately three o'clock on the morning of March 10, General Robert Hoke's division of thirty-five hundred men charged the Union left flank. Hoke's men met heavy Union firepower, which included both artillery and small arms fire, and were forced to retire from the field. In cooperation with Hoke's attack on the left, Confederate General Daniel H. Hill mounted an offensive on the Union right-center. At first, Hill's force of fifteen hundred moved rapidly but progress was slowed by heavy Union firepower.¹⁴ General Hill hesitated and then withdrew his men into the deep woods.

Charles Tournier, a Union private defending against Hoke's attack on the left flank, described his experiences on the morning of March 10, 1865:

Our guns were all loaded and as the Rebels charged we kept up a constant fire. But I guess we could have been driven out had it not been for a battery of 12 pound steel cannon that came in our line and commenced [sic] pouring their shot and shell into the advancing Rebels, mowing down both men and trees in the nearby woods.¹⁵

¹⁴Diary of Henry Baldwin, Excerpts in Humphrey Family Papers, Privately owned, Kinston, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Henry Baldwin Diary; Cox, March to the Sea, 161; Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 287-288.

¹⁵Diary of Charles Tournier, March 10, 1865.

By midday March 10, General Bragg realized his attempts to defeat the Union forces had failed. The Confederate commander pulled all his troops back to Kinston and paused there on the night of March 10. That afternoon Bragg telegraphed Joseph E. Johnston and informed his superior that the attacks on the Union lines had failed and that reinforcements were coming in daily to the enemy. Bragg was also aware of Union General William T. Sherman's advance into North Carolina. "Under the conditions," he wired, "I deem it best, with the information you give, to join you, which I shall proceed to do unless otherwise directed."¹⁶ Joseph E. Johnston initially wired Bragg and told him to move his forces to Goldsboro. Later the evening of March 10, General Johnston ordered Bragg to "Move immediately to Smithfield."¹⁷

As Bragg and his Confederate forces evacuated Kinston, the ironclad Neuse was scuttled by its crew and left to sink in a bend of the river. The C.S.S. Neuse had been initially constructed in Wayne County and floated down the Neuse River to Kinston in late 1863. At Kinston, the ship had been outfitted and partially armored. Because of low water conditions the Neuse sat near Kinston until March, 1865. General Bragg hoped to utilize the gunboat to cover the Confederate retreat from Kinston, but the rapid advance of Union troops threatened the Neuse so its commander, Captain Joseph Price, decided to destroy the vessel.

¹⁶Braxton Bragg to Joseph E. Johnston, March 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1364.

¹⁷Joseph E. Johnston to Braxton Bragg, March 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1364.

Union General Cox reported the destruction of the Confederate ironclad as Federal troops reached the outskirts of Kinston.¹⁸

A Confederate cavalry contingent was ordered by Bragg to stay in Kinston until the last possible moment. These mounted troops were to harass the Union advance and act as eyes for the Confederate commanders, who had all moved westward towards Goldsboro. This rear guard was ordered to burn all bridges as they left the Kinston-Lenoir County area. No easy invasion routes were to be left open for the Federal soldiers.¹⁹

The action around the Wise Fork area had some profound effects on civilians caught in the battle area. One home, known as the Cobb House, played an important role in the battle at Wise Fork. On March 8, the house was commandeered by Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Tolles, commander of the right wing of the 15th Connecticut Volunteers. The Cobb House was used as a headquarters and observation post during the early part of the battle. The attic of the large house had windows in each end, which offered excellent panoramas of the Southwest Creek-Wise Fork area. Much of the fighting, especially on the eighth of March, took place very near the Cobb House.²⁰

¹⁸William N. Still, "The Career of the Confederate Ironclad Neuse," North Carolina Historical Review, XLVIII (Winter, 1966), 1-13.

¹⁹Colonel John B. Sale to Colonel Charles Zachary, March 13, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1389; Braxton Bragg to Colonel Zachary, March 13, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1389.

²⁰Diary of Henry Baldwin, March 9-10, 1865. Union troops who were using the Cobb House wrote their names on the walls and ceilings in the attic. Most of these names are completely legible today. Today called the Humphrey House, the dwelling faces U.S. Highway 70 in eastern Lenoir County. It is privately owned and currently lived in.

After the Confederate attacks on March 10 had ceased, Union soldiers advanced and again occupied the Cobb House. This time it was used as a field hospital. A diary belonging to Sergeant Henry Baldwin described the use of the house as a hospital after the bitterly fought battle of March 10, 1865:

Most of the wounded were gathered in and about Dr. Cobb's house. The piazza was covered with men who had been placed there when it began to rain. Corporal Mandeville I remember was sitting on the floor leaning back against the house; his breast exposed and I saw in it a ghastly hole, from which blood oozed at his every breath.²¹

Sergeant Baldwin stated that he could hear men calling from the woods. Evidently wounded men from both sides were lying in the rain. Baldwin did all he could to help the wounded soldiers, and at ten o'clock wagons came up to remove the injured men.²²

As Federal troops continued their advance on Kinston, many of the townspeople fled. The situation was almost identical to that of 1862 when Confederate troops had withdrawn westward to Goldsboro, leaving the town to be occupied by Union soldiers. Skirmishers reached the south bank of the Neuse River by March 14. Signal corps officers observed the opposite bank and decided only token resistance would be offered by Confederates.

As soon as the citizens of Kinston realized that the Union army was at the outskirts of town, they began to take action to prevent the destruction of the town. A delegation of townspeople, headed by the mayor and offering a flag of truce, walked to the remnants of the Neuse

²¹Diary of Henry Baldwin, March 10, 1865.

²²Diary of Henry Baldwin, March 10, 1865.

River bridge. There they met and conversed with General John M. Schofield, commander of the Department of North Carolina, who by this time had come up from New Bern. "I am authorized to surrender the town and claim protection for its inhabitants," said the mayor. General Schofield replied, "The protection will depend upon your behavior."²³ The first Union soldier to cross the river was a Lieutenant J. B. Knox of the signal corps. Knox had a pole cut and then placed it across the gap in the burned-out Neuse River bridge. He "shinned" across the pole and immediately set to work establishing a signal station in Kinston. Knox placed a signal station atop the tallest building in Kinston, which was the Saint James Hotel. This lofty position allowed communication from Kinston to the terminus of the military telegraph lines near the railroad construction crews, who were still several miles from Kinston at this time.²⁴

The majority of Federal soldiers entered Kinston on March 14 by way of a pontoon bridge constructed over the Neuse River. No resistance was offered to the troops as they occupied the town. Camps were established on the town outskirts. Unlike the occupation forces of 1862, these Union soldiers found little damaged property within Kinston. General Bragg had left explicit orders for the rear guard in Kinston to destroy all cotton and supplies that could not be shipped quickly to Goldsboro by rail. Evidently these orders were not fully carried out as destruction of goods and property was minimal.²⁵

²³The North Carolina Times, March 17, 1865.

²⁴The North Carolina Times, March 28, 1865.

²⁵Francis S. Parker, Acting Adjutant General for Department of North Carolina, Special Orders #59, March 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 1368.

Foraging Union troops caused more damage than the retreating Confederates. According to the North Carolina Times, the people of Kinston had lost little in the way of personal property except for horses and wood for fuel. The Union soldiers were fond of destroying fences and using them for firewood. Wise Fork had borne the brunt of the action in this campaign and was therefore the most heavily damaged area in Lenoir County as of March, 1865.

All stores and businesses were closed in Kinston by March 15 and all was quiet in the town. Civilians did not appear to be afraid of Union troops, as many wandered around the streets. Newspaper correspondents reported the town was not much different than it had been in 1862. The townspeople were described as pleasant and respectful to the Federal troops. Some wounded Union soldiers captured on the first day of battle of Wise Fork were found being cared for in private homes in Kinston.²⁶

A substantial Federal force was stationed in the Kinston area until the end of the war. Even though strict orders had been issued by officers prohibiting foraging and pilfering, many soldiers continued to steal and harass the local citizens. Many soldiers left camp daily and proceeded to raid Lenoir County farms looking for extra food and alcoholic drink. At first only a few brazen men went against the non-stealing orders, but the number of foragers increased as the Union soldiers became bored with occupation duties in Kinston.

Both local residents and Confederate soldiers took all this in good humor and made jokes and told stories concerning the recent southern war

²⁶The North Carolina Times, March 28, 1865.

effort. One local woman was heard to remark disgustingly that if the Confederate troops "continued to fall back much longer it would be necessary to rent land to fight on." A captured Confederate deserter at Southwest Creek told Union authorities he had heard a peculiar conversation between two officers at Kinston. Supposedly, the secret conversation was between General D. H. Hill and a Colonel Beard.

Hill: "Colonel, what shall we do?"

Beard: "Retreat to Tennessee, from there to Texas, and from Texas to hell. So as far as the privates are concerned, if they had half sense, they would desert and go home."

Hill: "True every word of it."²⁷

The eavesdropping private evidently took the officer's advice. Confederate morale locally was not high after the battle of Wise Fork.

Generals Cox and Schofield moved their forces out of Kinston on March 20. Their next military objective was Goldsboro, where they were to meet General William T. Sherman. An occupation force was left in town to protect against guerrilla activities and to unload supply boats that were daily plying up the Neuse River.

The battle of Wise Fork ended with a decisive Union victory and Confederate withdrawal from Lenoir County. This confrontation created numerous problems for the residents of the county, including damaged or destroyed private property, abuse of civil liberties, and commandeering of homes and businesses.

With Kinston and Lenoir County largely cleared of Confederate resistance, the Neuse River could now be utilized as a Union supply route. During the last few days of the Civil War, Kinston played a vital role to the final Federal war effort.

²⁷The North Carolina Times, March 28, 1865.

CHAPTER VI

THE USE OF KINSTON AS A UNION SUPPLY BASE:

MARCH-APRIL 1865

Months prior to the second battle of Kinston, General William T. Sherman had decided on Goldsboro as his objective in North Carolina where he planned to rest and resupply his troops. Sherman chose Goldsboro primarily because of its vital rail lines--the Atlantic and North Carolina and the Wilmington and Weldon. These two railroads would be used to transport supplies to the huge Union army while it paused on its way northward.¹

The second battle of Kinston took place because of the need to open Union supply routes to Goldsboro. That campaign witnessed severe problems with supplies. Dismal weather conditions caused roads to become virtual swamps and Union wagons to bog down in the quagmire. Supplies and provisions were partly hauled by trains from New Bern, but problems persisted.

Ultimately, Union leaders decided to utilize the Neuse River as a supply route in order to alleviate problems with the railroad and wagon trains. General Jacob D. Cox first used the Neuse and it was later a factor in General William T. Sherman's campaign. Both leaders needed supplies and the Neuse provided means for transportation.

The Neuse River had been previously used by the Union navy in 1862. Gunboats in December, 1862, proceeded up the Neuse River to within two

¹Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 293.

miles of Kinston. This small flotilla was plagued by the same problems the Neuse has always offered; it is a highly unpredictable river, characterized by swift currents, sand bars, underwater obstacles, and whirlpools. The single most important obstacle may have been the constantly changing water levels. This river has been known to rise or fall several feet in a few hours, often leaving unwary boats stranded.

The first actual mention of the use of naval support in the 1865 campaign arose because of exaggerated reports of a Confederate Neuse River pontoon bridge below Kinston. General Innis Palmer hastily telegraphed the naval commander at New Bern asking for vessels to destroy the rumored pontoon bridge. General Palmer, then a division commander, had not taken the time to send cavalry reconnaissance towards the Neuse road where the supposed bridge rested. General Schofield was not particularly pleased with Palmer's haste in sending requests for naval assistance and apparently overrode the appeal for aid.²

The primary reasons for dispatching boats up the Neuse was to ferry supplies. The river boats would not play any direct military role in the military campaign of 1865. The Union troops under the command of General Cox had advanced seven miles beyond the terminus of the railroad construction. The soldiers had rations for three days, but supplies were becoming a worry to the commanding generals.³

By March 2, the idea of using small boats to ferry men and equipment up the Neuse was considered. General Cox in a letter to Major

²J. M. Schofield to Major General J. D. Cox, March 9, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 748.

³J. D. Cox to Major General John M. Schofield, March 7, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 723.

John A. Campbell stated that "No light-draft gun boats are here, and we can therefore get no help from the Navy. We may get a light draft steamer from the Quartermaster's Department to ferry troops, but I am not yet informed whether the right kind has been found."⁴ Supplies were not reaching the front fast enough to suit Union commanders. They were looking for alternative transportation methods to aid them with the supply problem. The weather was still causing severe problems. Roads were virtually impassable and wagon trains were forced into using the rail roadbed for a road. This use of the roadbed helped supplies get through, but caused a slowdown of the reconstruction of the railroad needed so badly by Sherman.

Many of the Union troops were by this time getting low on supplies. Charles Tournier, a young Union soldier, reported that the supply problems were due to adverse weather and road conditions as well as to Confederate attacks on supply trains. "Our supply train has not been able to reach us," he wrote, "and we have not had anything to eat all day." On Thursday, March 8, Tournier wrote, "I started over where the horses had been feeding and found some kernals of corn in the mud or rather 'the sand.' I picked up my cup about one quarter full, put some water on it, set the cup in the fire and sat and watched it boil. When boiled soft I ate it for my breakfast."⁵

Problems with Cox's supplies continued. By March 7, Cox had dispatched a reconnaissance force along the Neuse River to determine if

⁴J. D. Cox to J. A. Campbell, March 2, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 654.

⁵Diary of Charles Tournier, March 8, 1865.

boats could effectively reach his troops.⁶ On March 9, General Cox telegraphed General Schofield at his New Bern headquarters that "We are having the greatest difficulty in getting up supplies and ammunition."⁷ By March 11, General Schofield had made arrangements to help General Cox's needy troops. "I have arranged to send supplies up by boat to Kinston, if it proves practicable to reach that point. Give me the first information of the naval expedition. . . ."⁸

Actually the naval expedition had departed from New Bern on the preceeding day. The flotilla of ten boats consisted of the Ella May, Shrapnel and eight armed launches and cutters. This naval force was commanded by a Lieutenant Commander James S. Thornton, who was under the direct command of Commander Alexander C. Rhind, senior naval officer at New Bern.⁹ General Cox dispatched some cavalry to patrol the river banks and seek out the naval force and open communication with them. Cox was not able to detach a large force to help the river boats because the telegram from Commander Rhind was received during the battle of Wise Fork (March 10, 1865).¹⁰ But by March 12, the Confederates had pulled back towards Goldsboro, abandoning their trenches east of

⁶J. D. Cox to A. C. Rhind, March 7, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 725.

⁷J. D. Cox to Major General John M. Schofield, March 9, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 747.

⁸J. M. Schofield to Major General J. D. Cox, March 11, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 788-789.

⁹A. C. Rhind to Major General J. D. Cox, March 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 770.

¹⁰J. D. Cox to A. C. Rhind, March 11, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 789.

Kinston, and the route to Kinston was clear for the Union forces. A March 12 dispatch from J. D. Cox to Major General Schofield at New Bern stated, "I believe it will be safe to send up the flats with provisions tomorrow, under convoy of the armed vessels which were up yesterday. To get to Kinston and open river communication at the earliest moment seems a pressing necessity."¹¹ ✓

The expedition that had departed from New Bern on the tenth reached the Kinston area on the eleventh of March. It is probable that some supplies and provisions were forwarded on this advance expedition, but most likely the mission was primarily to insure the security of the river as a supply route. The navy had also needed to check the Neuse to see if it were navigable up to Kinston. Commander Thornton's vessels were able to reach a point approximately three miles downstream from Kinston. But lack of sufficient coal supplies caused the return of the two army steamers, the Ella May and the Shrapnel, to New Bern.¹² Commander Rhind telegraphed General Cox: "The Ella May returned at 6:30 P.M. The Shrapnel is also on her way down. Captain Thornton reports that he met with no obstacles on his route. Will start the Shrapnel up as soon as coaled, if you wish, and send my boats again."¹³

¹¹J. D. Cox to Major General John M. Schofield, March 12, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 802.

¹²Report of Commander A. C. Rhind, March 13, 1865, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion (30 volumes, 1894-1914), Series I, XII, 65, hereinafter cited as Official Records (Navy).

¹³A. C. Rhind to Major General J. D. Cox, March 13, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 802.

Union commanders knew of the presence of the ironclad Neuse at Kinston. Earlier, on March 13, Alexander C. Rhind had planned "to rig a torpedo on the Ella May to blow up the rebel ironclad if possible."¹⁴ General Schofield did not share Rhind's fear of the Neuse and he certainly did not fancy the idea of attacking the ironclad with an ordinary army steamer. "The rebels will blow it up soon enough," he wrote.¹⁵ Schofield was correct, for on March 14 as Union forces entered Kinston, he telegraphed Commander Rhind at New Bern: "The ram is burnt; her wreck is in sight. The torpedo will therefore not be needed."¹⁶ The same dispatch also stated that "a convoy for the steamers and flats, loaded with rations is the only thing which can be of service to us now."¹⁷ The supply problem for Generals Cox and Schofield would finally be alleviated, now that Union boats could be sent up the Neuse to Kinston.

By March 14, Union forces had fully occupied and secured the Kinston area. As preparations were being made to repair the railroad to Goldsboro, river boats were ordered to proceed up the Neuse to Kinston with needed supplies.

General Schofield notified General Sherman and General Grant of the occupation of Kinston. Schofield noted that supplies were still a major

¹⁴A. C. Rhind to Major General J. D. Cox, March 13, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 814.

¹⁵J. M. Schofield to Major W. M. Wherry, March 14, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 814.

¹⁶J. D. Cox to A. C. Rhind, March 14, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 838.

¹⁷J. D. Cox to A. C. Rhind, March 14, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 838.

problem with his troops. He also reported that he had ordered a large force of construction workers to expedite repairs on the railroad, which by March 14 had not yet reached Kinston. General Schofield suggested, "If Sherman reaches Goldsborough by the 20th he will probably have to send his wagons to Kinston for supplies. I have barely teams enough to haul supplies for my troops three or four miles."¹⁸ Sherman needed supplies badly. The dispatches he sent as he approached Fayetteville conveyed his want of clothing and food for the troops under his command. He made it clear that he was pushing towards Goldsboro as rapidly as possible, and he wished supplies transported as close to this village as feasible in the remaining time.¹⁹

Finally, by March 14, naval vessels suitable for successfully navigating the Neuse River began arriving at New Bern. Gunboats had been particularly needed to protect the vulnerable river transports from Confederate shore parties. Alexander Rhind described one of these vessels as a "small gunboat drawing seven feet and with a heavy battery. She has 100 pounder rifle and three 24 pounders."²⁰ The U.S.S. Whitehead, the gunboat described by Rhind, was a tinclad, screw steamer with a weight of 105 tons. The ship was 93 feet in length, 19 feet 9 inches in beam, and 8 feet 3 inches in depth. The Whitehead had a

¹⁸J. M. Schofield to U.S. Grant, March 14, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 834.

¹⁹W. T. Sherman to Major General J. D. Cox, March 14, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 835.

²⁰A. C. Rhind to Major General J. D. Cox, March 14, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 838.

draft when loaded of 8 feet and 6 feet when not carrying a cargo. Maximum speed obtained by the ship was 8 knots.²¹

On March 14, the gunboat Shrapnel was ordered to convoy the steamers Ella May and General Shepley towards Kinston. They were to leave New Bern the morning of the fifteenth. The new gunboat Whitehead, which Rhind described as arriving at New Bern on the morning of March 14, was damaged on obstructions in the Neuse River. The problems were beginning to mount. The loss of the Whitehead was only the first of several inconveniences that would occur to Union forces in mid-March of 1865. The Neuse River was again playing her eternal tricks as the water level suddenly dropped to a low point. All boats were having extreme difficulty in navigating the river. The gunboat Shrapnel accompanied a barge up the Neuse River on the fourteenth, but there was no assurance that these boats would finish the journey.²²

By March 17, no boats had been able to reach Kinston. Schofield had not advanced on Goldsboro yet because he had not received enough supplies to support his soldiers. The problems Schofield encountered are depicted well in a dispatch to General Sherman on March 17: "I am trying to get boats up the river," Schofield wrote, "but none have succeeded in reaching this place yet. The supply question will trouble us."²³ Another problem that was just discovered, was that there were but four engines and eighty cars on the Atlantic and North Carolina

²¹Vessel descriptions, Official Records (Navy), Series I, I, 239.

²²A. C. Rhind to Major General J. D. Cox, March 15, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 854.

²³J. M. Schofield to W. T. Sherman, March 17, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 880.

Railroad. This amount of rolling stock was far too small to successfully supply Sherman or Schofield.²⁴

Finally, on March 19, the steamboats were able to reach Kinston. It had taken four days to accomplish the task which normally could be done in a day. By March 20 another flotilla of vessels arrived at Kinston. The same day the repaired railroad was supposed to reach the outskirts of the town.²⁵ General Cox decided to commence his move on Goldsboro the morning of the twentieth; he felt he had accumulated enough supplies to reach Goldsboro successfully. Sherman was also asking about the railroad repairs to Goldsboro, which by this time were far behind schedule.

The railroad bridge crossing the Neuse River near Kinston was finally completed. This bridge was one of the last delays in the reconstruction of the rail line to Goldsboro. As the Confederates had backed towards Goldsboro, they had been able to cause only superficial damage to the railroad tracks and bridges. Surprisingly, William W. Wright, chief of military railroad repair crews, found the line from Kinston to New Bern in far better shape than the one from Kinston to Goldsboro. Unlike the more eastern tracks, the line from Kinston to Goldsboro had been used until March 10 by Confederates, and this line was completely worn out. A letter from Colonel Orlando M. Poe, Sherman's Chief Engineer, to Colonel William Wright on March 22 directed Wright to finish the railroad as quickly as possible. "He [Sherman] wishes you to

²⁴J. M. Schofield to W. T. Sherman, March 17, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 880.

²⁵R. B. Trent to Lt. Colonel J. W. Barriger, March 20, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 923.

work day and night," he wrote, "authorizing you to pay any price that will further the work and to impress civilians or anybody else."²⁶

Colonel Wright ordered his crews to work on the railroad twenty-four hours a day. By the sheer diligence of Wright and the detainment of Sherman by a Confederate attack at Bentonville, the rail line was completed to Goldsboro the same day of Sherman's arrival.²⁷ The date was March 23. Sherman immediately sent his wagons to Kinston to procure desperately needed supplies. In a letter to Colonel Wright, Sherman expressed his disappointment that the railroad was not finished earlier and that badly needed supplies were not waiting for his men at Goldsboro.²⁸ No supplies had been stockpiled by the Union army at Goldsboro.

Even though the railroad was now finished, the problem of lack of rolling stock still had to be dealt with. Sherman knew his troops had been primarily supplied by foraging since leaving the Atlanta, Georgia, area. His special foraging parties had been ruthless, but were extremely successful in keeping his army well fed. The key to Sherman's army was movement, a strategy it was not following while at Goldsboro. Sherman's and Schofield's combined forces now totaled approximately ninety thousand men. Existing rail facilities could supply only daily rations and supplies. But Sherman needed to accumulate supplies for his next movement; the supply wagons had to be filled before he would leave

²⁶O. M. Poe to W. W. Wright, March 22, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 951.

²⁷Cox, March to the Sea, 211.

²⁸W. T. Sherman to Colonel W. W. Wright, March 23, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 970.

the Goldsboro area. Thus, the railroads had to be supplemented by other means of transportation.

On March 23 Sherman sent a message to his chief quartermaster, Brigadier General Langdon C. Easton, indicating that he had decided to make Kinston his main supply depot. "Look to increasing the transportation by water up the Neuse River as near Kinston as possible," he wrote, "and we can haul from there. This is to be in excess of the capacity of the railroad."²⁹ In other words, Sherman had decided the only way possible under the circumstances to re-supply his army was to use all available railroads, river boats, and wagons. Railroads were not adequately stocked to transport the necessary tonnage of provisions he needed.

Goldsboro was never intended to become a permanent base for Sherman. He intended to replenish his supplies quickly and then move on. "Our wagons are our storehouses," he wrote; "I must be off in twenty days, with wagons full, men reclad, etc."³⁰ While at Goldsboro, Sherman abolished the old foraging system and adopted new guidelines: foraging would continue, but special brigades or regiments with officers in charge would have this responsibility. Some of the foragers scoured the countryside looking for food in the Lenoir County area. Several foraging parties were seen by a soldier stationed in Kinston, who described them as wasteful, often leaving large amounts of food on the ground where they had camped the night before.³¹

²⁹W. T. Sherman to Brigadier General L. C. Easton, March 23, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 970.

³⁰W. T. Sherman to Brigadier General L. C. Easton, March 23, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 970.

³¹Special Field Orders: By A. M. Van Dyke, Assistant Adjutant

Sherman's troops were expecting abundant supplies to be awaiting them at Goldsboro, and they were sorely disappointed when they reached the village and the supplies were not there. The first supplies that finally arrived were such items as blouses, hats, pants, cavalry pants, shirts, drawers, shoes, boots, and stockings.³² Some of the Union troops would not get supplies via Kinston or the railroad until March 27. Foragers provided a great deal of food in the first few days at Goldsboro.³³

The steamboats daily plied up the Neuse River to Kinston. These light draft steamers were convoyed by small gunboats which acted as protection against Confederate shore parties. At times infantry were placed upon the supply boats to act as guards. General Schofield was determined to protect these boats with their valuable cargoes from Confederate guerrilla bands along the banks of the Neuse. The steamers often towed or pushed barges or flats loaded with provisions.

A wide variety of boats was used for the transportation of Sherman's provisions up the Neuse. Letters, dispatches, and official reports give good descriptions of the river vessels used by the Union quartermasters in 1865. At least two schooners, the Telescope and the Zenith, were used to transport supplies.³⁴ Several small tugboats

General, March 23, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 972; Diary of Charles Tournier, March 24, 1865.

³²E. M. Joel, Chief Quartermaster 7th Army Corp, to Captain C. Cadle, Assistant Adjutant 7th Army, March 23, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 974.

³³John G. Barrett, Sherman's March Through the Carolinas (Chapel Hill, 1954), 191.

³⁴A. L. Fitch to J. A. Campbell, April 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part III, 160.

were utilized, including the Gamma, Delta and the Wilderness. Barges or flats were used extensively on the Neuse. These barges often had names, such as the barge J. R. Gould. The J. R. Gould was the only barge on the Neuse mentioned specifically by the Army gunboat squadron commander.³⁵

The tugboats were generally around sixty feet in length, with a beam of fourteen feet and a depth of approximately six feet. Speeds obtained by the tugs ranged from nine to twelve knots. The U.S.S. Delta, a Union picket boat (tugboat), had a draft of seven feet eight inches, while the U.S.S. Gamma required six feet of water to float.³⁶ This was about the maximum draft that a boat could have and still be able to navigate the Neuse River safely.

Problems plagued the river boats continuously. Mechanical breakdowns and low water conditions troubled the Union supply boats at every hand. Although the bulk of the Confederate forces had been withdrawn to an area west of Goldsboro, guerrilla bands bothered the river traffic occasionally. A group of raiders under the command of Colonel John N. Whitford perhaps did the greatest amount of damage to the Union fleet. On April 7, troops of the 67th North Carolina Regiment captured and burned one side-wheel steamer, the Minquas, and two barges. All were fully loaded with quartermaster's and commissary stores. These supplies were almost totally lost.³⁷ On April 10, Amaya L. Fitch, captain

³⁵A. L. Fitch to J. A. Campbell, April 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part III, 160.

³⁶Vessel Description, Official Records (Navy), Series I, XII, 73, 90.

³⁷Report of Colonel John Whitford, CSA, April 9, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part I, 1134.

of the U.S.S. Parke, reported that he observed the burned steamer Minquas and one of her barges. Gunboats were being called away from the Neuse area, and by April 10, only two armed vessels were available to convoy transports. Lack of protective gunboats and the "irregular mode of sending vessels from here [New Bern] to Kinston" caused definite convoy problems.³⁸ Other problems that caused navigational headaches were obstructions placed in the Neuse River and a sunken wreck that blocked part of the channel. The obstructions had been placed by Confederates early in the war and had done an effective job of hindering gunboat activity in 1862. Most of the obstructions had been removed by Federal forces by this time, but some of the pilings and rocks still forced Union boats to use narrow channels. Despite the shallow channels and narrow passages, the Union river flotilla managed to complete a remarkable number of trips from New Bern to Kinston.

There are no good records which give clues to loading and unloading areas used by Federals in 1865. Records show that as early as 1858, steamboats utilized docks on the west side of Kinston. Military docks in 1865 were probably located in the same area. A soldier named Henry Thompson wrote of the supply boats on March 21, 1865: "Our men doing duty in town, also unloading grain and stores from boats. . . ."³⁹ These supplies were unloaded from river boats and transferred to wagons. Wagon trains would then plod on to Goldsboro, where General Sherman and his troops waited. The wagons probably used the main route to Goldsboro,

³⁸A. L. Fitch to J. A. Campbell, April 10, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part III, 160.

³⁹Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, March 21, 1865.

which was roughly parallel to Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. These wagons loaded with supplies, along with foragers and railroads, resupplied Sherman's army at Goldsboro. He planned eventually to move upon Richmond in conjunction with General Ulysses S. Grant.

Sherman's army continued to accumulate supplies and rest till the second week of April. On the tenth, Sherman ordered the majority of his ninety thousand soldiers to advance from Goldsboro. His target was not Richmond but the army of General Joseph E. Johnston. Richmond had fallen to General U. S. Grant the previous day.

Occupation forces remained in Kinston and Goldsboro, but the river boats ceased to ply the Neuse and the wagon trains stopped. Sherman, now moving, obtained his supplementary supplies by rail. Kinston and Lenoir County, militarily defeated, occupied by Union troops and no longer vital to either side, waited for the end of the war.

CHAPTER VII
THE LAST DAYS OF THE
CIVIL WAR IN LENOIR COUNTY:
MARCH 14-APRIL 18, 1865

Federal troops under the command of General John M. Schofield occupied Kinston on March 14, 1865. Unlike the Union occupation in 1862, these soldiers did not leave the following day. On March 17 General Schofield issued "Special Field Orders No. 5," which stated:

A Brigade not less than 1,000 strong with one light battery will be detailed from General Palmer's division for garrison and fatigue duty at Kinston and the railroad and wagon bridges near that place.¹

Accordingly, Federal troops were stationed in the Kinston-Lenoir County area until the Civil War ended.

This large number of Union soldiers in the vicinity of Kinston caused numerous problems. One of the most aggravating problems was unofficial foraging, commonly referred to by natives as simply stealing. Charles Tournier was one of many who sneaked away from camp and went foraging around Lenoir County. Accompanied by several friends, Tournier traveled about five miles into the country where a plantation with a large smokehouse and storage area was located. "Each of us found a grain bag," he recorded in his diary, "shoveled in some meal, then a ham on top." They even persuaded an old black man to lead them to a cache

¹Special Field Orders No. 5: by Major General John M. Schofield, March 17, 1865, Official Records (Army), Series I, XLVII, Part II, 881.

of hidden wine. Tournier and his buddies accumulated such a large amount of goods that they had to "borrow" an ox cart in order to return to camp.² Another group of Union soldiers led by Tournier walked out into the country to another plantation house where they asked for "a good square meal." The women of the house served the soldiers a meal of biscuits, sauce, bacon, cake, and coffee. On the way back to Kinston, the foraging party stopped at a desolate shanty and made off with several fowl.³

Another soldier stationed in the Kinston area reported on the activities of his friends. "Boys go out on foraging," he wrote. "[They] bring in hams, hogs, sheep, potatoes, beans."⁴ Some of the Federal troops in Kinston were indeed robbing the civilians of Lenoir County.

Some of these Union soldiers discovered Lenoir County wine and applejack (brandy). One group of Federals got intoxicated and ripped apart several tents. After much yelling and screaming, the soldiers finally quieted down. One poor fellow went to sleep with his head in a frying pan, much to the amusement of his friends. Yet, Union officers did not let this type of wild behavior go unpunished. The usual sentence was extra work details. In this particular case, the men were marched into the woods and ordered to cut railroad ties.⁴

On March 20, 1865, the majority of Federal troops under the command of General Schofield marched from Kinston toward Goldsboro, where they

²Diary of Charles Tournier, March 17, 1865.

³Diary of Charles Tournier, March 17, 1865.

⁴Diary of Charles Tournier, March 17-18, 1865.

planned to rendezvous with General William T. Sherman's army. Before leaving Kinston, General Schofield appointed Colonel Charles Upham as provost marshall of the Lenoir County area.

By March 20, Confederate resistance had largely disappeared in Lenoir County. A few days earlier, a Confederate guerrilla named Conner infiltrated the town of Kinston and attempted to capture the captain of the guard and to release Confederate prisoners. Conner also hoped to round up Confederate stragglers in the immediate Kinston area. The guerrilla fighter's plan failed and he was captured by Union provost guards.⁵

As the majority of Federal troops left Lenoir County, the occupation force sought better housing and accommodations within Kinston. These men were tired of living in tents. Some Federals like Charles Tournier moved into small log houses that had been constructed originally by Confederates garrisoned in Kinston. Tournier and several friends enjoyed living in their crude log house. Unfortunately, while he was on guard duty, Tournier's house was robbed and the men lost many of their private possessions. Tournier and his friends never discovered the thief or recovered their property.

Henry J. H. Thompson, a Union soldier, described his accommodations in Kinston as a house "9 x 8, half boards and half tent."⁶ By late March, the Federal troops were seeking even better accommodations. On March 25, Henry Thompson reported that he and his friends moved into a

⁵The North Carolina Times, March 17, 1865.

⁶Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, March 25, 1865; Diary of Charles Tournier, March 28, 1865.

small house on the east side of Kinston near the carriage shops. Thompson wrote: "The boys took down a lot of carriage shops for bunks."⁷

The last reported bit of Confederate resistance in Lenoir County took place on March 28, 1865. On that day a supposed brigade of Confederate cavalry exchanged shots with Federal soldiers several miles west of Kinston. There were no reports of casualties on either side.⁸

By March 28 Union soldiers reported that large numbers of people were streaming through the Kinston-Lenoir County area. According to Henry Thompson, the Confederate army was collapsing. He wrote: "The rebs are coming in to our lines fast here, they all claim that they might [as well] give up first as last." A few days later Thompson wrote: "People going through here of all grades and leaving the south as fast as possible."⁹

By late March, the occupation troops were beginning to interact with the people of Kinston. Many of the Federal soldiers and townspeople lost their animosity and became friends. A large percentage of Kinston residents appeared glad that the war was winding down. About this time, Federal officials decided to issue United States government rations to townspeople who took the oath of allegiance to the United States of America. This was an incentive for swearing loyalty to the Federal government.

⁷Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, March 25, 1865.

⁸Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, March 28, 1865.

⁹Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, March 28, 1865.

In early April, a smallpox epidemic broke out primarily among the blacks in the Kinston area. Federal officials ordered all blacks to leave the immediate Kinston vicinity. The smallpox epidemic was limited and the disease quickly disappeared.¹⁰

As the month of April passed, Federal soldiers began helping local people in various ways. Henry Thompson fixed a lady's stovepipe and cleaned a clock. He also ran errands for the lady, including a trip to the local mill. The woman invited Thompson to dine with her that evening. The soldier continued to make friends in the town of Kinston. Thompson became especially close to Mrs. Quinn, the lady for whom he had earlier run errands.¹¹ Henry Thompson mentioned Mrs. Quinn frequently in his diary entries. She let him borrow tools to work on his quarters. Thompson described the lady as like a mother and mentioned the frequency with which he ate at her home. Mrs. Quinn had two girls who cooked and cleaned house for her. Thompson took his dirty laundry there to be washed the entire time he was stationed at Kinston. The Union soldier did not pay a cent for his laundry or his meals.¹²

Diary entries during the month of April seldom mention the war. Typical notes describe the Kinston area during the spring. Henry Thompson wrote on April 3, "Lilacs are in bloom and the trees are leaved out considerable."¹³ Some soldiers mentioned food prices in Lenoir County which were expensive in the spring of 1865. One soldier

¹⁰Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 3, 1865.

¹¹Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, March 26, 1865.

¹²Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 3, 1865.

¹³Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 3, 1865

wrote that butter was going for "\$1.00 to \$1.25 per pound, cheese for 60¢ per pound, and other things accordingly."¹⁴

Generally, news from the battle front was slow reaching the Kinston area. Union officers tried to maintain discipline and a military atmosphere among the Federal troops. Union provost officers also strived to maintain law and order within the Lenoir County area. At least one Union soldier was executed during the month of April, although the reason for this execution is not known.

Some Union soldiers began to tire of occupation duties and dull soldierly routines. A few tried to call on local women. Charles Tournier recorded in his diary that he attempted to visit a young girl he had seen several days earlier. Tournier had earlier labeled the girl as "white trash." The soldier had to sneak away from camp and then traverse a swamp to reach the girl's house. Just as Tournier reached her home, he was seen by a passing Union officer. The captain proceeded to escort young Tournier back to Kinston.¹⁵

Other Union soldiers walked down to the Neuse River and went fishing and swimming. Many of the soldier-fishermen mentioned the great number of shad in the river. Some of the more industrious soldiers found an old net and managed to catch a few of the elusive shad. The Union soldiers also enjoyed swimming in the Neuse River. These Union occupation soldiers had much free time and they spent many hours at the banks of the Neuse.¹⁶

¹⁴Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 3, 1865.

¹⁵Diary of Charles Tournier, March 25, 1865.

¹⁶Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 2, 3, 1865.

By mid-April many former Confederate soldiers had returned to their home county. Henry Thompson wrote of them:

The natives, deserters, and refugees that have come here [Kinston] to their homes, have gone to planting their gardens and are quite docile and quiet and think it is time to give up fighting.¹⁷

Those returning home to Lenoir County were attempting to start their normal lives again. Union troops sometimes helped in this transition. Federal soldiers aided in planting crops and repairing buildings all around the Kinston area. Local residents repaid these Union troops with food and lodging in their homes.

As the end of the war approached, the number of returning Confederates increased. They were joined by a large number of Confederate prisoners of war. On April 18, 1865, as Charles Tournier was waiting for the train to take him home, he witnessed a group of Confederate prisoners arriving in Kinston. He remarked how shabbily dressed they were. Tournier reported that some of the prisoners had large amounts of Confederate money. Tournier sold some of the prisoners Union hard-tack for Confederate currency. The young Union soldier desired to have some Confederate money for a keepsake of the Civil War.¹⁸

The news of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston's surrender on April 18 was slow in reaching Lenoir County. The people of this county did not learn of the event until April 20. Many of the Union soldiers wanted to celebrate the occasion by firing cannons but unfortunately there were none in Kinston on this day. Even the courthouse bells had

¹⁷Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 15, 1865.

¹⁸Diary of Charles Tournier, April 18, 1865.

no ropes by which to ring them. Henry Thompson wrote of the momentous day: "We celebrated the news in talking and thought." Union soldiers were ordered by officers to remain quiet, keep calm and neat, and remain in their camps.¹⁹ So ended the war in Kinston, North Carolina.

Within days, former Confederate soldiers began streaming into Kinston. Henry Thompson wrote of the mass migration in his diary:

The reb soldiers are thankful to be home alive, for that is about all, for they are worn out and dragged to death by disease, exposure and little to eat.²⁰

Henry Thompson, the Union soldier, finally got to meet Mrs. Quinn's husband, who was a Confederate soldier. Their meeting went amiably, with Mr. Quinn inviting Thompson to breakfast the next morning. This was the spirit of the time in Kinston; the war was over.

The town of Kinston was quiet. Residents of the county spent their time planting, rebuilding and restoring the area towards its prewar status. The war had been long and tiring and had affected the lives of many residents of Lenoir County.

The four-year Civil War affected the United States directly more than any other conflict in its history. This imbroglio created drastic changes in the life styles of all Americans. These sweeping changes were reflected well in Lenoir County, North Carolina. The residents of this rural county witnessed social, economic, and political change during the Civil War. People experienced loss of personal freedoms, military conscription, rampant inflation and exorbitant prices.

¹⁹Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 20, 1865.

²⁰Diary of Henry J. H. Thompson, April 25, 1865.

Children suffered under a decaying educational system and a crumbling social hierarchy. Youngsters, especially males, found themselves forced into positions of labor and responsibility at increasingly early ages. Lack of male labor led to breakdowns in agricultural operations. County farms fell into disuse and agricultural production and diversity dropped to an all-time low.

The town of Kinston was changed by the large number of Confederate soldiers stationed there. As these soldiers sought the traditional war-time entertainments, once-sedate Kinston became full of saloons and drinking parlors. Kinston became a boisterous and gaudy boom town during the years of the Civil War.

The county was invaded twice and Kinston suffered enemy occupation on both occasions. Materially, Lenoir County residents lost a great deal, not to mention the mental anguish caused by the violence of the two battles of Kinston. Residents suffered loss of property due to Confederate as well as Federal troops. There was often confusion as to who the real enemy really was. Loyalties accordingly flipfopped as conditions changed within the county. By the time of the Union occupation in March, 1865, civilian resistance had all but ceased.

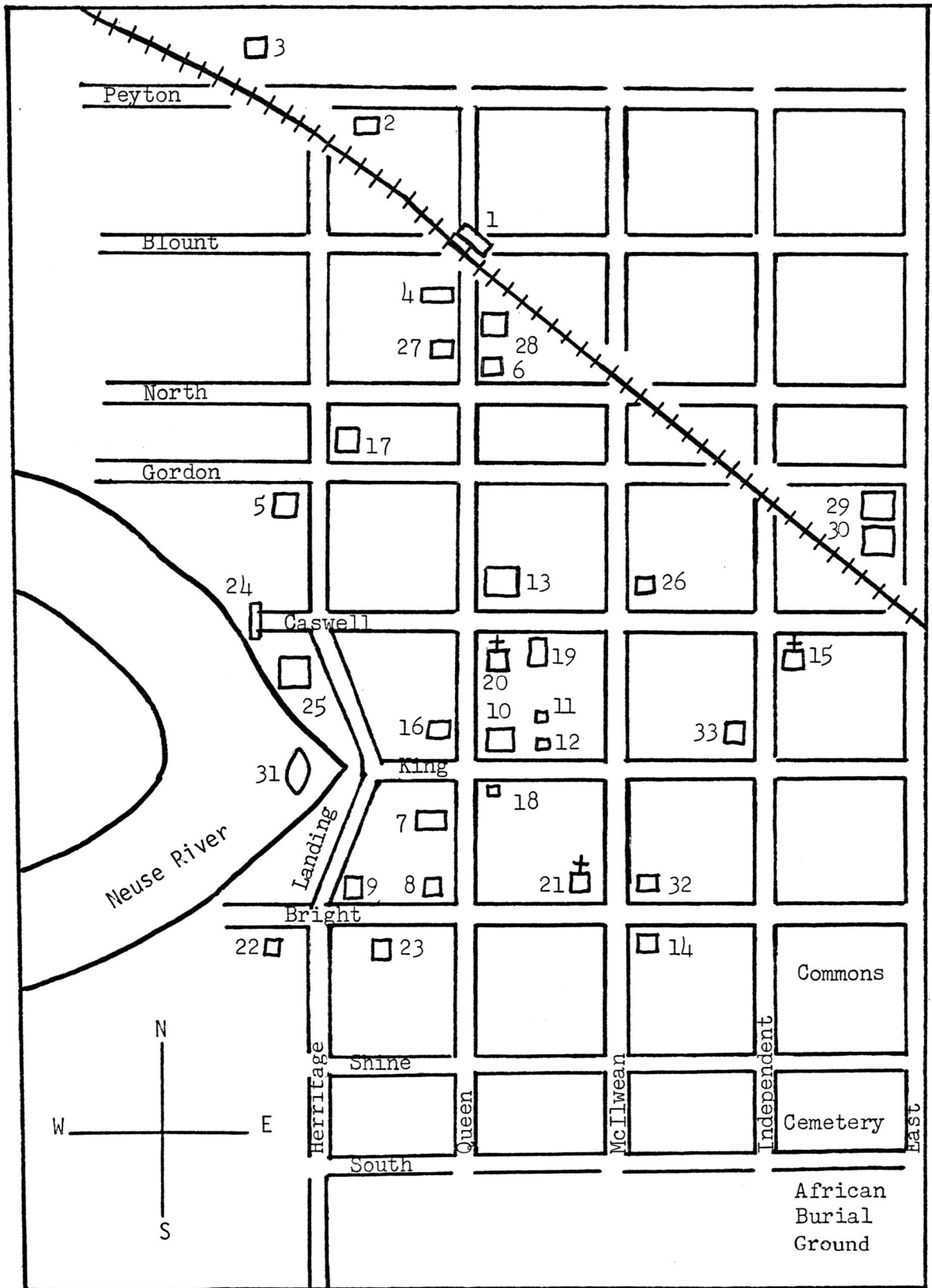
As the war subsided and finally ended, male residents of Lenoir County returned to their homes and professions. Many women and children who had evacuated the county during the war also began to return home. They all began the long task of restoring normality, if indeed that was at all possible. It was a time to look ahead, to forget regional animosity, and to work together to forge a better future.

KEY TO MAP OF KINSTON

1. Railroad Station
2. Hilton Brothers Factory
3. Hilton Brothers' House
4. Walter Dunn's Print Shop
5. Washington Tannery
6. Cane Mill and (Jasper Webb) House
7. Jasper Cummings Tailor Shop
8. Pollock's House (Dr.)
1864 Construction date
9. Cobb House--"Castle"
Used as Hostelry, prison,
and hospital
10. Courthouse
11. Jail
12. Well House
13. Nicol's Store
14. Nicol's House "Corner"
15. Methodist Church
16. Wood and West General Store
17. St. Charles Hotel
18. Peeble's House
19. Dibble Bros. Carriage
Factory
20. St. Mary's Episcopal Church
21. Baptist Church
22. N. G. Blount House
"Heritage House"
Constructed Eighteenth Century
23. "Red House"--circa 1700
Residence of Richard Caswell
24. Steamboat landing and
Warehouse (1856)
25. Turpentine Distillery
26. Dr. A. R. Miller--Dentist
27. Bakery
28. Washington Shoe Factory
29. Jasper B. Webb Carriage Shop
30. Jasper B. Webb's Machine Shop
31. Gunboat Neuse--Originally
moored at Caswell Street,
moved to King Street
32. Gatlin Cottage
33. Old Masonic Hall

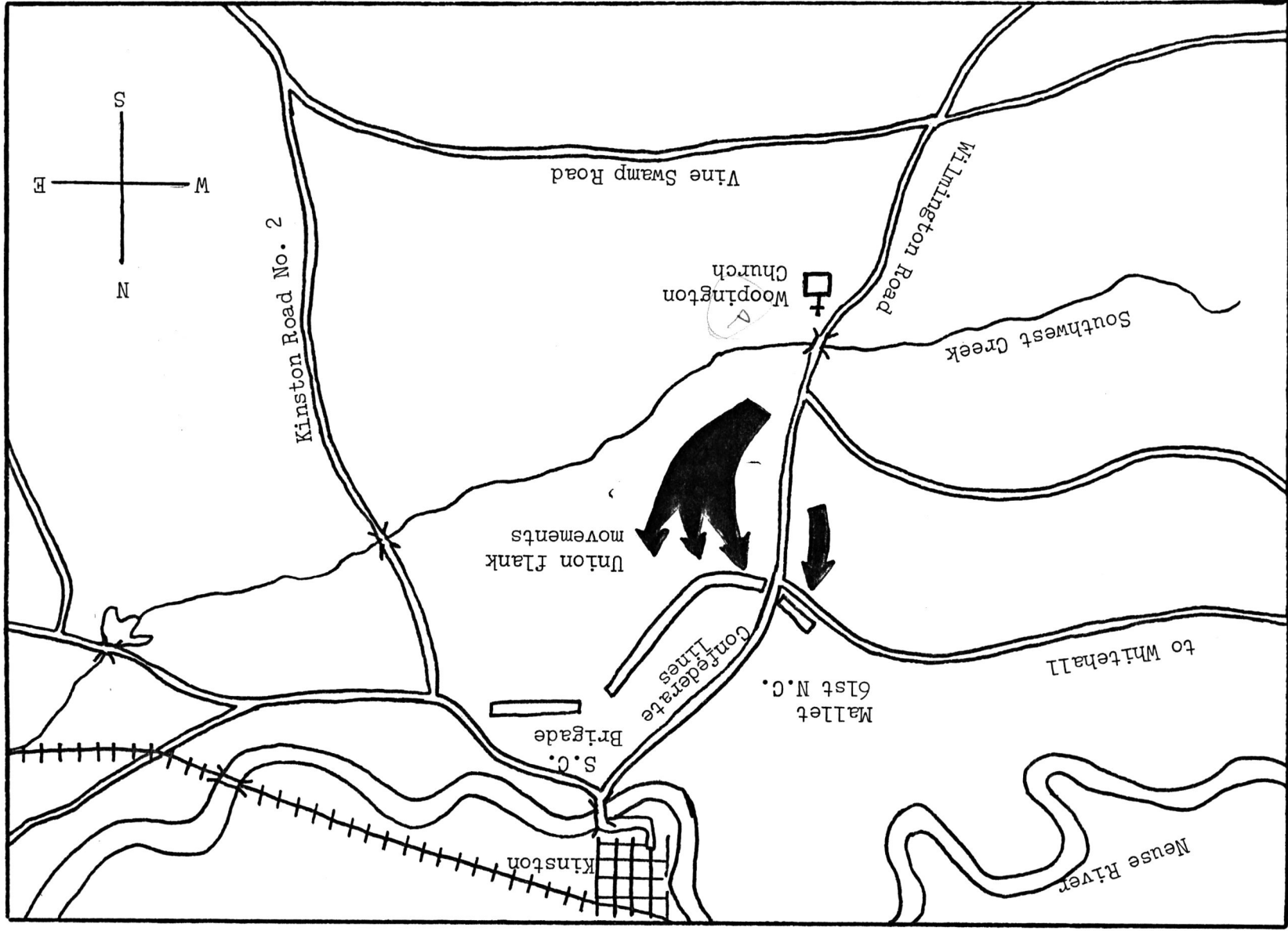
APPENDIX A

MAP OF KINSTON DURING CIVIL WAR



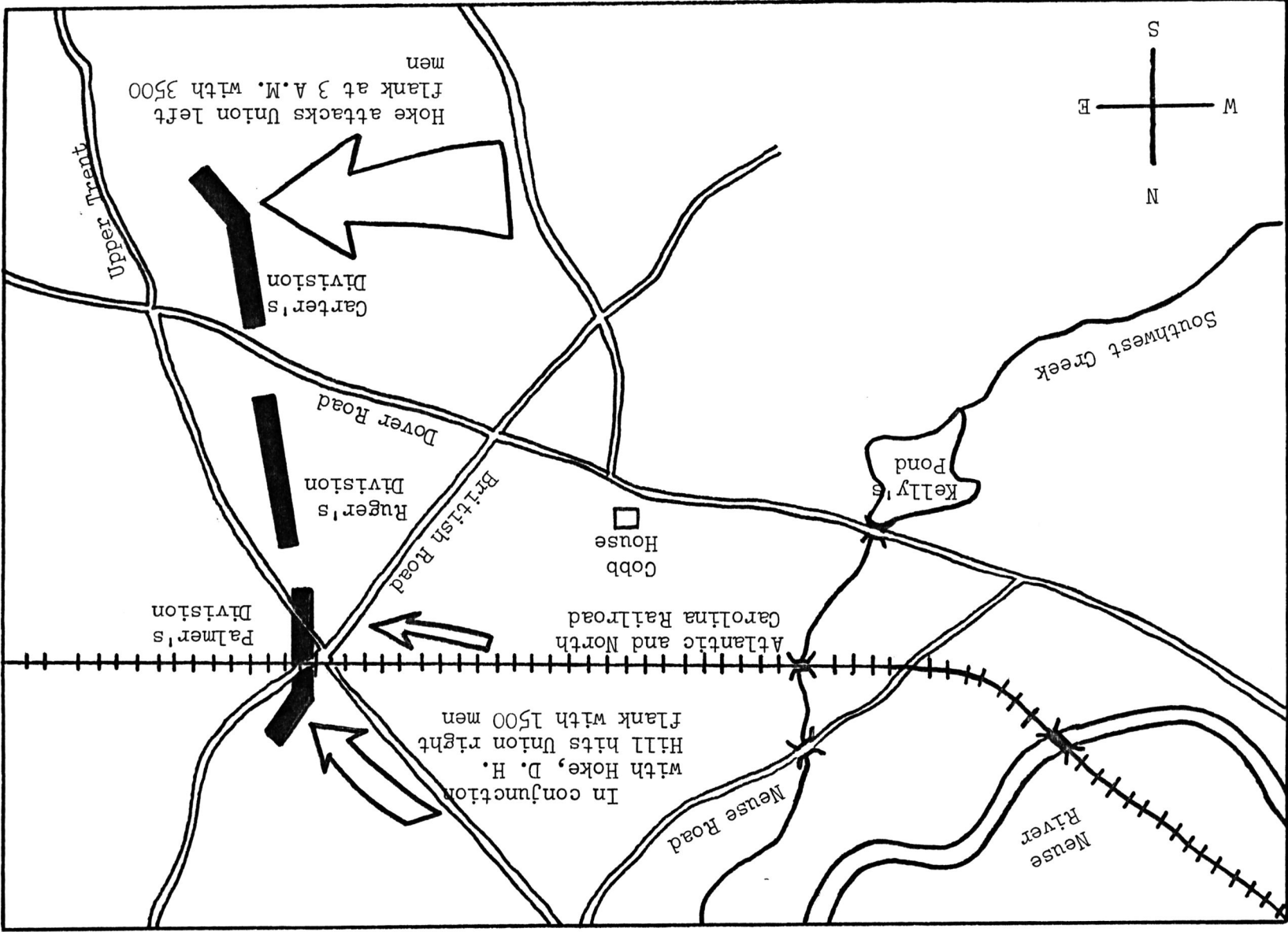
APPENDIX B

FIRST BATTLE OF KINSTON: DECEMBER 14, 1862



APPENDIX C

SECOND BATTLE OF KINSTON: MARCH 10, 1865



APPENDIX D

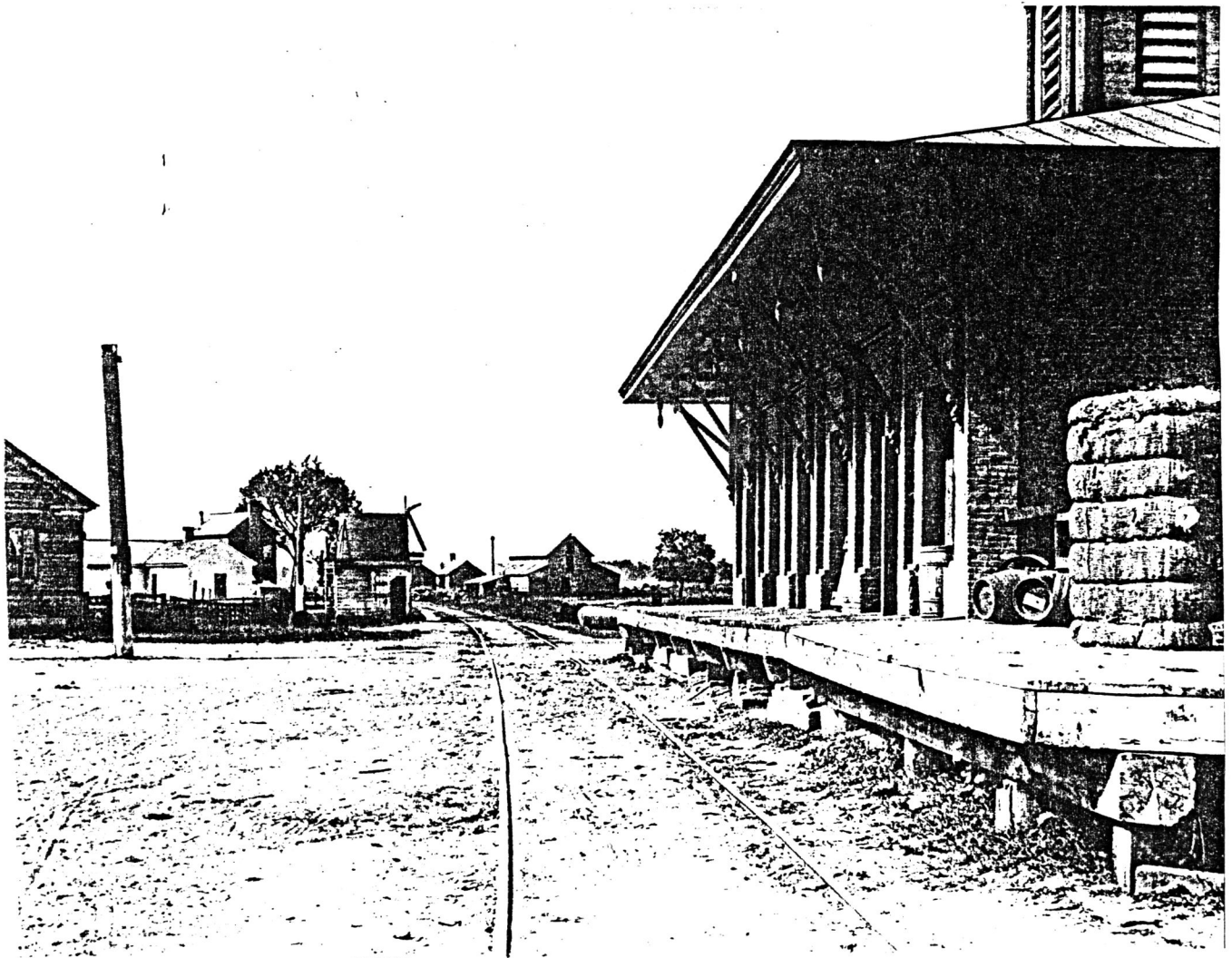
PHOTOGRAPHS OF KINSTON-LENOIR COUNTY AREA: 1884¹

KINSTON: THE MAIN STREET



¹William Garrison Reed Collection, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. William Garrison Reed, a Union soldier in the 44th Massachusetts Regiment, participated in the first battle of Kinston. In 1884, he revisited the battle site and photographed the Kinston-Lenoir County area. Although twenty-two years had passed since the battle, Reed commented that the area had changed very little.

RAILROAD STATION WHERE THE
44TH MASSACHUSETTS BIVOUACKED
DECEMBER 14, 1862



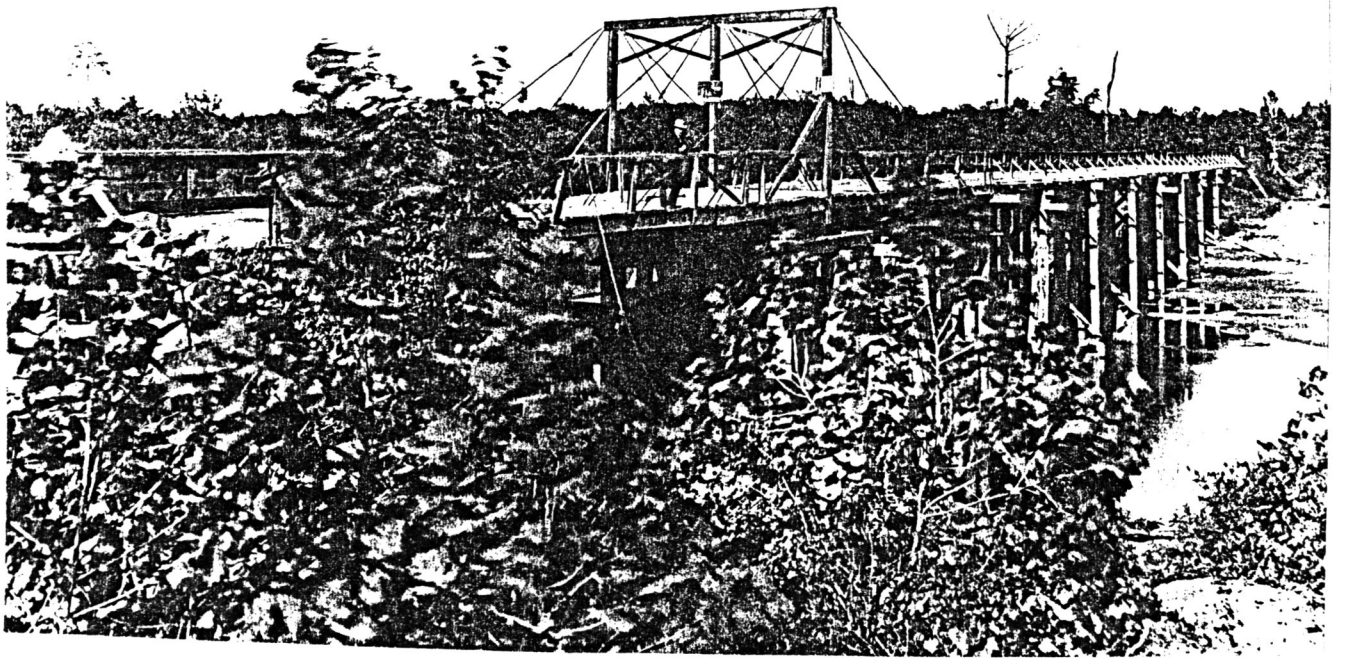
ROAD WHICH THE LEFT WING OF THE

44TH MASSACHUSETTS FOLLOWED

DECEMBER 14, 1862

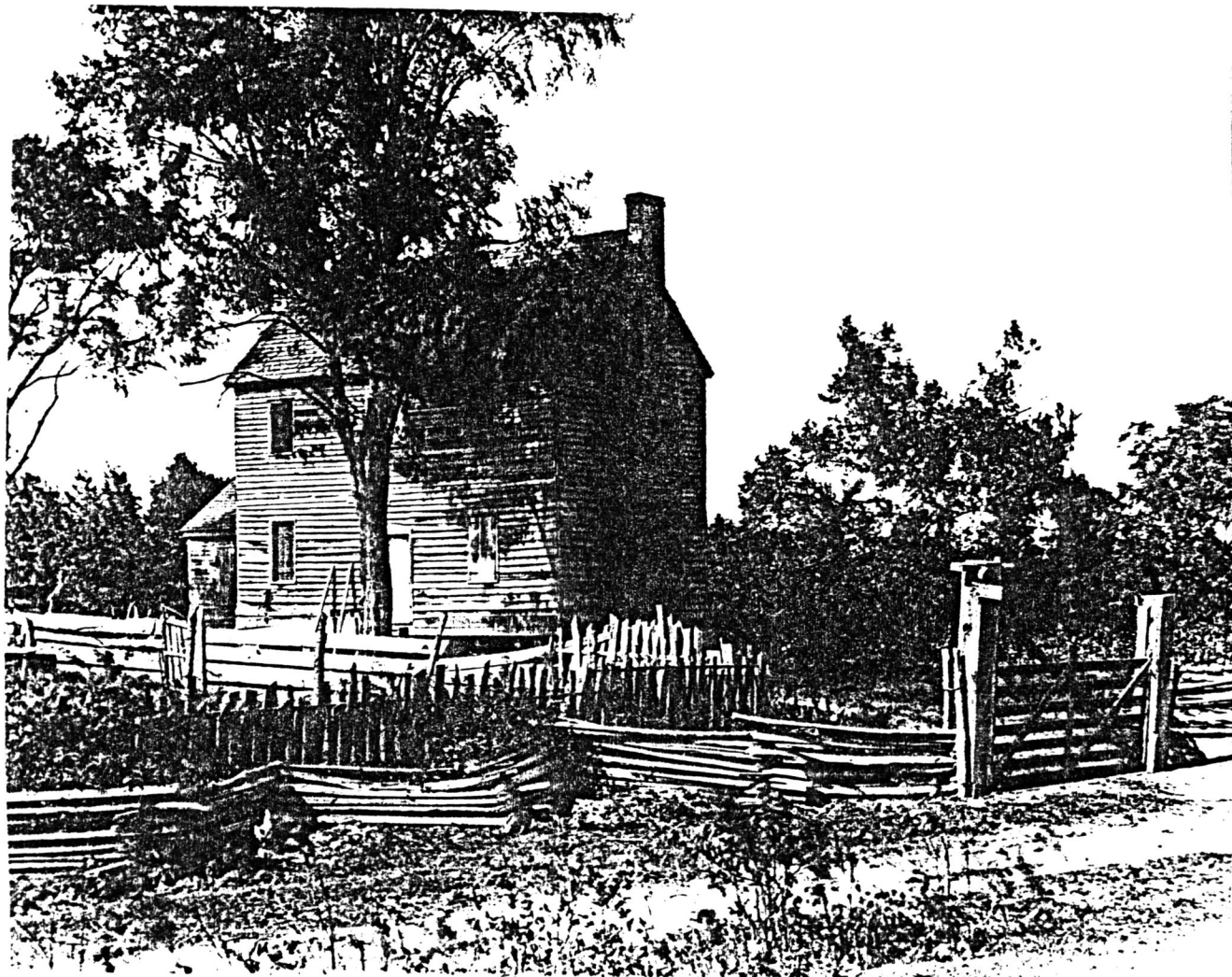


THE BRIDGE



HOUSE NEAR THE BRIDGE, USED AS A HOSPITAL

DECEMBER 14, 1862



BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Manuscript Sources

- Diary of Henry Baldwin, Humphrey Family Papers, privately owned, Kinston, North Carolina.
- Hugh C. Browning Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- Burgwyn Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- John Washington Calton Letters, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- Dr. Leroy Chappell Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- George A. Chase Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- James W. Cox Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Jane Fisher Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- Joseph F. Fowler Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- E. T. Hale Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Wait and Leone Hines Collection, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- Kennon Letters, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- Mrs. Benjamin R. Lacy Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- William F. Loftin Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

- John F. Mallet Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- William A. Martin Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- William G. Morris Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- John C. Morrison Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Martin Moser Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Lalla Pelot Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- Leonidas L. Polk Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Mary Jane Pursley Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- William Garrison Reed Collection, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- Henry J. H. Thompson Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
- Diary of Charles Tournier, New Bern Historical Collection, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.
- Governor Zebulon B. Vance Papers, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.
- Edward D. Walsh Papers, Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

B. Government Documents and Official Records

1. United States Documents

Agricultural and Manufacturing Census Records of Fifteen Southern States, 1860, Washington; United States Bureau of the Census.

1860 Census, Population Schedule, Washington; United States Bureau of the Census.

1860 Census, Social Statistics, Washington; United States Bureau of the Census.

1860 Census, Slave Population Schedule, Washington; United States Bureau of the Census.

House of Representatives Executive Documents, 39th Congress, First Session, Document No. 98: "Murder of Union Soldiers in North Carolina."

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

Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion, 30 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1927.

2. North Carolina Document

"Lenoir County Common School Reports, 1861-1865," North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

C. Recollections and Contemporary Accounts

Cox, J. D. March to the Sea. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1890.

Hawkins, Rush C. An Account of the Assassination of Loyal Citizens in North Carolina for having Served in the Union Army which took place at Kinston, N.C. in the months of February and March, 1864. New York: privately printed, 1898.

Howe, W. W. Kinston, Whitehall and Goldsboro Expedition, December 1862. New York: W. W. Howe, 1890.

Trumbell, H. Clay. War Memoirs of An Army Chaplain. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1898.

D. Regimental Histories

Clark, Walter, ed. Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-65. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1901.

Derby, W. P. Bearing Arms in the Twenty-Seventh Massachusetts Regiment. Boston: Wright and Potter, 1883.

Mann, Albert. History of the Forty-Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Militia. Boston: Forty-Fifth Veteran Association, 1910.

Roe, Alfred S. The Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. Boston: Fifth Regiment Veterans Association, 1911.

Roe, Alfred S. The Twenty-Fourth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. Worcester, Mass.: Twenty-Fourth Veteran Association, 1907.

E. Newspapers and Periodicals

"1899 Industrial Issue of Kinston Daily Free Press," Kinston Daily Free Press, 1899.

"Kinston in the Sixties," Carolina and the Southern Cross, I (November, 1913).

The North Carolina Times (New Bern), 1865.

Raleigh Daily Progress, 1863.

The Richmond Whig, 1862.

Tarboro Southerner, January 17, 1863.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A. Monographs and Special Studies

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

Barrett, John Gilchrist. Sherman's March Through the Carolinas. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954.

Johnson, Talmadge C. and Charles Holloman. The Story of Kinston and Lenoir County. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1954.

Kohler, Mike. 200 Years of Progress: A Report of the History and Achievements of the People of Lenoir County. Kinston: Lenoir County Bicentennial Commission, 1976.

Powell, William S. Annals of Progress: The Story of Kinston and Lenoir County. Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1963.

Price, Charles L. "The United States Military Railroads in North Carolina: 1862-1865," North Carolina Historical Review, LIII (July, 1976), 248.

Still, William N. "The Career of the Confederate Ironclad Neuse," North Carolina Historical Review, XLVIII (Winter, 1966), 1-13.