

Carolina Chronicles

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Jack E. Fryar, Jr. Publisher & Editor

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Carolina Chronicles
Magazine

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- Working Other Mens' Fields: Sharecropping in Carolina
- Having A Voice:
 Black Political Activity in Wilmington, 1865-1898
- Coastal Cousins: The Cape Fear and Charleston have been linked from the very beginning

Welcome to Carolina Chronicles!

We hope to pick up where Coastal Chronicles magazine left off

Telcome to *Carolina Chronicles*! Some of you reading this may remember an earlier incarnation of this publication, *Coastal Chronicles* magazine. Published in the mid-1990s, *Coastal Chronicles* was intended to tell true, factually accurate stories about the great history to be found along the North Carolina coast in a way that was also fun and entertaining.

The magazine was very well received. I was publishing 10,000 copies each month, and they were all gone within a week of arriving at our distribution outlets at museums, historic sites, tourist attractions, commercial outlets, and via mailed subscriptions. Teachers used them in classrooms to help teach North Carolina history to students too often bereft of resources to aid that instruction. The accumulated stories from *Coastal Chronicles* magazine eventually became the first title published by Dram Tree Books, the small book-publishing house that evolved from my earlier magazine publishing efforts. Since then, Dram Tree Books has published forty titles, including another volume of stories from *Coastal Chronicles*.

This version of my history magazine is markedly different from the earlier, 1990s version. For one, it is digital. One of the constraints of doing a print version of a periodical is that you are limited when it comes to how many copies you can make. Now, digital software allows me to produce a magazine that can live in the ether, downloadable and sharable by anyone who wants to read it, anywhere in the world. I just drop my layouts into the software, and it converts it into a flipbook that is readable (and printable) on any platform. You will also notice that the stories in each issue have a bit more heft to them than in the past. Since the stories we tell will likely be instrumental in teaching younger people about North and South Carolina's history, I feel it is important that we do a better job of telling where our sources come from and making sure the history is right (or at least attributable). Finally, I have expanded the magazine's scope to include all of North and South Carolina. The two states are connected in so many ways, and as a region we share much of the same past. The expanded coverage area also allows me greater freedom to write about stories that interest me, but that may not have fit under the umbrella of Coastal Chronicles' coastal North Carolina coverage area.

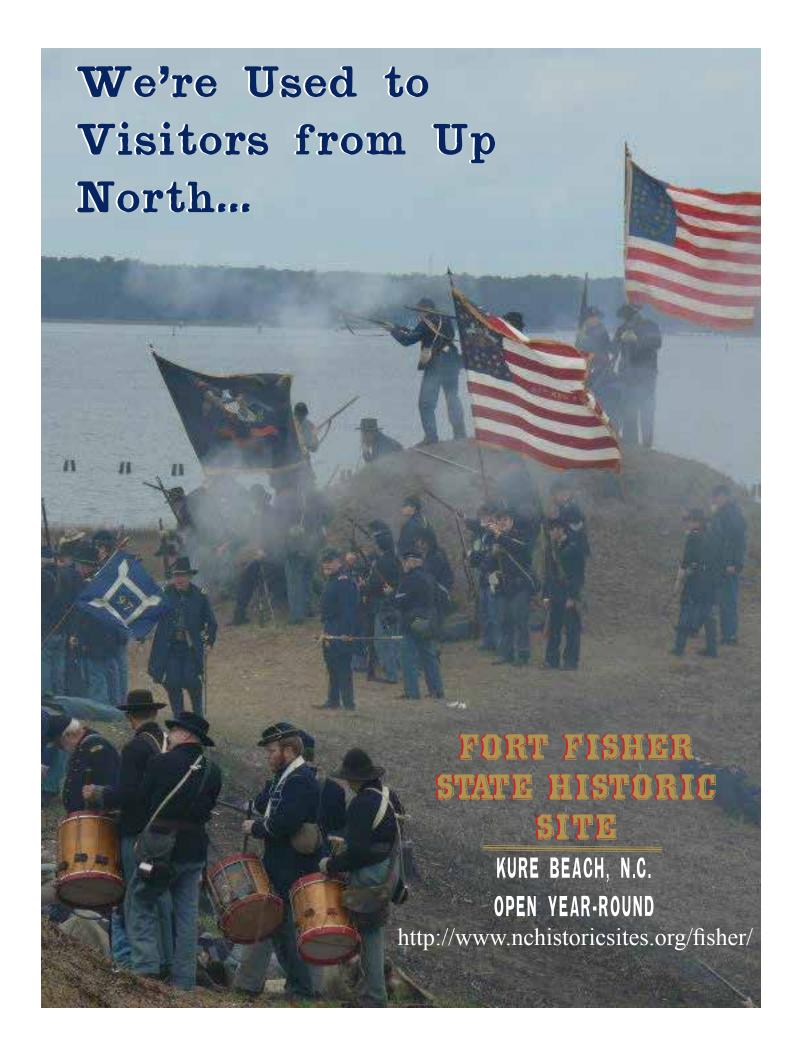
I intend to publish *Carolina Chronicles* as often as I can. I am also a high school history teacher, so there are lots of demands on my time. If you have story ideas – or if you've written a story yourself that you would like to contribute – feel free to get in touch with me. You will find my contact information in the masthead to the left on this page. I hope this effort will find as much favor as *Coastal Chronicles* did twenty years ago. If so, feel free to share it with your history buddies, organizations, and classrooms. If you can think of ways to make it better, let me know your ideas. In the meantime, enjoy!

Jack E. Fryar, Jr.

Have a story idea? Have a story you've written that you would like to see in the magazine? Contact *Carolina Chronicles* at carolinachroniclesmagazine@gmail.com

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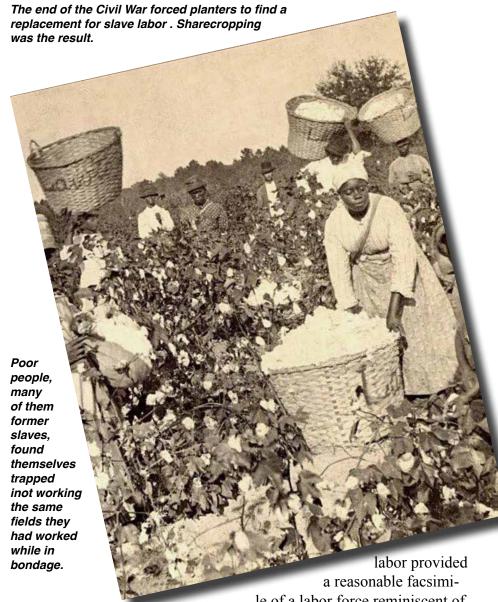
WORKING OTHER MEN' FIELDS...

After the Civil War, poor black and white fant to trading their labor for a share of the crops property owners. The result was a system of a that in many ways replicated the bondage of slavery.

By Jack E. Fryar, Jr.

he end of the Civil War changed North Carolina. Gone were the large pools of enslaved labor that made the South's plantation economy viable. To replace it, landowners desperate to stave off ruin were forced to adopt new strategies in order to turn a profit. Plantations were sold off and subdivided. Poor farmers – both black and white – became tenants on other men's land, trading sweat equity for meager livings and leaky roofs. The precarious existence of Carolina share-croppers and tenant farmers was already little more than subsistence living in the decades between 1865 and 1929, but the coming of the Great Depression turned the lives of sharecropper families into a losing game that





few could win. Only Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives provided any sort of lifeline for Carolinians trapped in the vicious poverty of sharecropping.

The end of the Civil War left large landowners bereft of the coerced labor that made large-scale farming economically feasible in the antebellum period. Given the wildly fluctuating prices of cotton (which, along with tobacco, was the dominant Southern crop), paying wage laborers to do the same tasks that slaves performed in years past was just not a workable solution. For a while, gang

le of a labor force reminiscent of slave days, when large numbers of usually related freed blacks would contract with landowners to work plantation lands. But the work gang model foundered when competing farm owners began hiring away laborers from their current employers, leaving jobs half finished. Disenchantment with the work gang system grew out of dissatisfaction on the part of landowners with intra-season competition for laborers, and on the part of workers who were less than satisfied with the received fruits of their labors. To curb this, Southern states began enacting black codes, or laws designed to prevent competition for labor. But black codes ultimately proved ineffective in controlling labor mobility. By the turn of the century, farm workers were habitually moving from farm to farm. A new system was needed to save Southern agriculture.

North Carolina Governor Thomas W. Bickett once described the crop-lien system as "the boll weevil of North Carolina," a sentiment echoed in a report generated by the N.C. Department of Agriculture in 1922. In 1880, one in four farmers nationally were tenants on someone else's land. By 1922, that number had grown to two in five, and in North Carolina the ratio was even higher. The report of the N.C. Department of Agriculture asserted that while landlords and owner-operators suffered under the crop-lien and chattel system in place at the time, "...landless farmers (were) farming under this handicap in three times as great numbers as are the landed."

Under the crop-lien system, landowners managed to create a labor model that closely mimicked slavery. One North Carolina contract from the Tar River area stipulated that workers would work from sun up to sun down, except on Sundays, and undertake no night work except as needed. Assemblies and visits from undesirable persons were forbidden (likely out of fear of union organizers). Workers were compensated with housing (in varying states of repair), permission to collect firewood, the right to keep one pig, a few chickens, and have a small personal garden. Bacon and cornmeal were provided based on the perceived worth of the laborer. Sixteen dollars a month

One North Carolina contract from the Tar River area stipulated that workers would work from sun up to sun down, except on Sundays, and undertake no night work except as needed. Assemblies and visits from undesirable persons were forbidden (likely out of fear of union organizers).

was paid to the most productive, happy, deferential, and obedient worker. While the crop-lien system may not have been evil in and of itself, the exploitative nature of its implementation often made it so.

The North Carolina state legislature passed the County Government Law and the Landlord and Tenant Acts of 1876 to codify the return of power to planters at the local level. The laws allowed planters to use state and local law to insulate themselves from pressures to reform. The laws ushered in a return to slavery in all but name. Landowners did not own the people who worked their fields, but they did control their wages, the houses they lived in, and the conditions they worked under. They controlled the workers' access to the necessities of life. In the event of non-compliance, they had the legal right to evict them from their homes and deprive them of their iobs.

In North Carolina, tenant-plantations typically consisted of five tenants and their families, who worked an average of 570 acres. Contracts between landowners and those who were hired to work their fields usually called for payment in shares of the crop (69%), or for standing wages (23%). Planters sought to avoid the development of a labor market system, in which the demand

for workers dictated wages. Black codes helped in this by limiting black voting rights, their ability to own property, or to be properly represented in the legal system. Debt peonage became a significant part of the economic side of Jim Crow, in which poor black tenant farmers had no recourse but to buy their necessities from landlords at inflated prices and with usurious interest rates.

During Reconstruction and the years between 1880 and 1900, Southerners were slower to recover from the devastation of the war than other parts of the nation. The percentage of owner-operated farms in the South decreased from sixty-four percent to fifty percent between 1880 and 1910.

Two decades before the turn of the twentieth century, twelve percent of Southern farms were rented and twenty-four percent were sharecropped. By 1910, that number had risen to fifteen percent and thirty-five percent respectively. The increase in farmers working land they did not own was a reflection of the lack of credit and employment options in the South. For many, farming was the only employment available to them. This led to the establishment of what has been termed the "agricultural ladder" system of farm economics, in which poor men started out working as wage laborers, tenants, or sharecroppers on the lands of wealthier men. In theory, as time progressed and they were able to

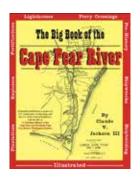


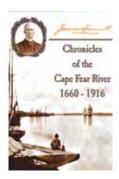
Governor Thomas Bickett recognized the pernicious nature of sharecropping and tenant farming when he called it the "boll weevil of North Carolina."

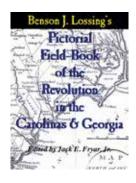
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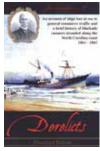


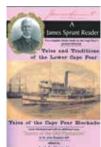


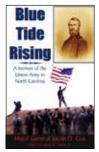


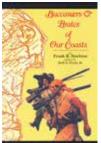












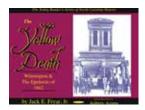












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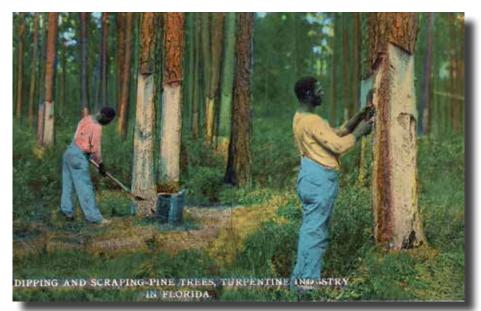
climb the rungs of the ladder, these poor laborers would eventually come to be small landowners in their own right. The theory and the practice too often turned out to be very different things.

There were five rungs on the South's agricultural ladder. At the top of the ladder were the small and large landowners. At the bottom were wage laborers, men so poor the only asset they had was the sweat of their brow. Wage laborers worked for landowners in return for a cash payday. Sharecroppers, a step above wage laborers, accounted for roughly fifteen percent of both black and white farmers in the South. The term sharecropper is likely linked to the turpentine industry of the American southeast that developed in the 1830s. Legally, sharecroppers were wage workers paid with a share of the crop that they could sell for themselves at the best price they could find. Next came tenant farmers. Tenants came in two varieties: share tenants or cash tenants. Share tenants paid a portion of the crop yield to the landlord for use of the land (essentially the reverse of a sharecropper). Cash tenants rented land from the owner with a cash payment, and kept the yields of the land for themselves.

Sharecropping expanded because the post-bellum South had few sources of credit that farmers with little or no collateral could call on to secure the funds needed to own and operate their own farms. Hard currency was scarce in the states of the old Confederacy, and banks and other lending institutions never really existed there in the first place. The depression of the cotton market retarded wages

for laborers, too. Coupled with the lack of credit sources, sharecropping became a means to an end for Southern farmers. The common thread in North Carolina sharecropping contracts was the mutual interest of both the landowner and the cropper in the efficiency of the farming operation. Sharecropping offered workers a percentage of the crops they grew, and thus provided incentive to boost that production as much as possible. Because their profit depended on the crop yield,

them an adequate standard of living in a world that was based more and more on a commercial/capitalist model. The earnings they could make were simply not enough to provide the capital needed for larger operations, and sources of credit for borrowing did not exist either. The end of World War I saw the United States flooded with a host of doughboys that needed work that did not exist in the cities. The scarcity of factory work in urban centers resulted in a reverse migra-



The term "sharecropper" probably originated with the soutnern naval stores industry that harvested long leaf pine sap to produce tar, pitch, and turpentine.

sharecroppers, in theory, were more productive than wage laborers.

The 142nd Psalm laments, "In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me." North Carolina sharecroppers might have thought the Biblical warning applied specifically to them. While the theory of the agricultural ladder seemed dandy, the practice suffered under the weight of an economy and society that could not provide the resources that participants needed to be successful. Most farmers worked lands too small to produce enough yield to allow

tion back to rural climes. The root of the problem for farmers was that too many people sought a piece of a Southern agricultural pie that was already too small.

To lessen the need for credit or assistance from outside sources, most sharecroppers and small farmers produced what they could for their own consumption. In Gaston County, N.C., for instance, more than half the farmers there produced eighty-two percent of all the family food on the same farm they worked between 1913 and 1914. But sharecroppers still spent

up to fifty percent of their meager incomes on store-bought food, evidence that just because sharecroppers were poor did not mean they desired modern conveniences any less than anyone else.

The chief impediment to Southern farmers' ability to achieve some semblance of a modern lifestyle was the lack of capital. Money was available through three main sources: savings or earnings, borrowing, or via inheritance or marriage. By the turn of the twen-

tieth century, there were a million farmers in the South whose production was valued at less than \$250 per year. For those people, their chief concern was not building a nest egg to grow the family farming concern. Their lives were consumed with trying to simply keep body and soul together.

Securing credit was made even more difficult because North Carolina sharecroppers, like their brethren throughout the South, had little

in the way of collateral to secure a loan. Sources of commercial and personal loans like banks were few and far between in the South, leaving only landowners and merchants as sources of capital for the farm families who worked the land. Sharecroppers had no choice but to borrow money for short-term living and operating expenses using their share of crops in the ground to secure the loan, at interest rates of twenty to thirty percent.

Saving for a brighter future was simply not possible under such conditions. Between 1880 and the Great Depression, farming became family trades. When sons reached maturity, or daughters married, they moved off to farms of their own. By 1900, nearly forty percent of Southern farmers ran little more than subsistence operations, and black farm income was markedly less than that of whites.

Perhaps the only thing worse than being a sharecropper

Despite their efforts to be self-sustaining by growing their own crops, poor farmers still sent as much as half of their meager incomes on store bought food from places like this general store.

in the South was being a black sharecropper there. For black sharecroppers like Georgia's Ned Cobb, seventy-five years of tilling the earth had been made infinitely more difficult by white arrogance, threats, abuse, and avarice. "All God's dangers ain't a white man," he told one interviewer, but then qualified the statement by allowing

that a good many of them were. White landlords often treated black tenants and sharecroppers with a double standard, protecting them from local authorities, while at the same time trying to shortchange them at settlement time. "Every landlord I ever had dealings with tried to euchre me," Cobb declared. Cobb offered that treatment as explanation (and probably a lament) for why young people raised on Southern farms were often quick to quit the fields once they came of

age.

"They has once in days past made crops under the white man's administration and didn't get nothing out of it," Cobb explained. "He don't want to farm today regardless to what he could make out there: he don't want to plow no mule – that was his bondage and he is turning away from it. He huntin' for a public job, leavin' the possession of the earth to

the white man."

While the years after 1880 saw more and more whites enter into sharecropping, in the plantation states blacks outnumbered white croppers by a margin of three to one for much of the early twentieth century. Both races depended on credit extended by the landowner for much of the crop year. Blacks and whites both were forced by necessity to shop in commissaries and stores owned by their

landlords. When time came to settle up after the crop had been sold, blacks were totally at the mercy of the landowner, who calculated not just the crop costs, but also kept the books relating to monies owed for commissary purchases. Black croppers simply had to accept what they were told they owed. In this way, sharecropping was also a racial and class system, as well as an economic one.

The racial/class nature of sharecropping is evident in the preference most landowners had for black tenants. During the 1920s and 1930s, during the mass migration of African-Americans from the South to Northern urban centers, landowners became frustrated at the outflow of their preferred laborers. "A white tenant has his notions of running a farm and is less amenable to suggestions," said North Carolina landowner Henry Calhoon Weathers. "I can say... 'Go hitch up a horse' when I want a horse hitched...to a Negro...and I can't to a white man. One white tenant...was such a know-it-all I soon had to get rid of him. He was a good farmer, it's true, but right or wrong the landlord should govern...Negroes are more loyal."

Loyal or not, Southern blacks were not ignorant to the life that sharecropping led to. As sixty-two-year-old Jim Parker of North Carolina put it in 1939, "My daddy, after freedom, spent his life share-croppin', movin' round from place to place, and died not ownin' a foot o' ground. I aimed to do better'n that, but it looks like I ain't made much improvement on his record. He eat and wore clothes; that's about where I am."

Despite the racism of the

South during the Jim Crow era, necessity forced a cooperation between the races in the rural countryside that was missing in urban centers. Sharecropping blacks and their white landlords all used the same general stores, doctors, gins, warehouses, roads, and recreation areas (lakes and other swimming holes, ball fields, etc.). The only places where integration was inviolate were schools, churches, social clubs, and cemeteries.

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1922 study by the state
department of
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eighteen acres each,
barely enough to
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if weather cooperated and other factors
worked in their favor.

The odd contradiction to that reality of racial cooperation are the hundreds of expressions of racial hostility spouted by every race and class in personal history interviews conducted by Federal Works Project writers in South Carolina between 1938-1939. Yet in North Carolina, such expressions of hostility were either absent or at least noticeably less venomous. For instance, in the 1930s white moonshiner and part-time Works Project Administration worker John Twiford, shared his mule, plow, and

even jugs of corn squeezings with a black neighbor in eastern North Carolina. The interviewer who took Twiford's history described the two men as familiar in a chiding, witty way, men who drank from the same demijohn, disdaining racial etiquette.

Even if relations between landlord and tenant in North Carolina were more cordial than that of their counterparts to the south, that does not mean the two classes did not have their differences Landlords often disapproved of how tenants spent their meager incomes on things that, to the landlord, were not essentials. Automobiles purchased by sharecroppers particularly drew their ire, as it gave tenants a means to escape their rural isolation to shop at some place other than the landlord-owned general store. Landlords also felt that croppers should be spending more on work essentials like tools and fertilizer.

In North Carolina, a 1922 study by the state department of agriculture found more than 117,000 farmers were landless. These families worked an average of just eighteen acres each, barely enough to make a living on even if weather cooperated and other factors worked in their favor.

Such favorable conditions did not exist in North Carolina in 1922. Planting practices left land barren, bereft of nutrients because of the insistence on planting cotton and tobacco to the exclusion of almost anything else. In two of the three counties surveyed, ninety-nine percent of planted lands were given over to crops that exhausted rather than rehabilitated the soil. Edgecombe County, with

A 1922 survey of 1,014 North Carolina sharecroppers and their families found:

- Only four percent of crops grown by black sharecroppers in eastern North Carolina were improvement crops that rejuvenated the soil.
- There was only one cow for every 138 tilled acres among white sharecroppers, and one cow for every 277 acres for black croppers in the Coastal Plains' Edgecombe County.
- Black croppers produced only 32.9 gallons of milk per year per family. That equals only seven tenths of a quart (or three tenths of a glass) per individual per day. Even at that, overall only nine percent of share cropping families produced any milk at all.
- The cash income of white tenants and sharecroppers in mountainous Madison County was less than tencents per day per person.
- More than seventy-five percent of all farmers surveyed used short-term credit to conduct farming operations.
- The equity holdings of black families sharecropping in the Piedmont's Chatham County was just \$36.
- Thirteen percent of all farm lands included in the survey were being worked by insolvent men.
- Two percent of all families surveyed were living in one-room houses. Extrapolating that number out to the rest of North Carolina's sharecropping population, that means more than 6,000 rural North Carolina families were living together in one-room houses of dubious and varying states of repair. For two-room houses, the number rose to 42,000, a total large enough to include a full fifth of every landless family in the state.
- None of the families surveyed, white or black, owned a bathtub or had indoor plumbing. None of the black farmers surveyed even had running water.
- · Over thirty-one percent of the landless mothers and fathers surveyed were illiterate.
- Of those who did attend school, most managed to go only as high as third grade. Among black landless farmers, few even completed a whole year of first grade.

the highest degree of tenancy, also had the highest percentage of land planted in exhaustive crops. Rehabilitating crops such as alfalfa, soybeans, cowpeas, rye, and hay were hard to find.

The North Carolina sharecroppers surveyed were much poorer than the landlords whose fields they toiled in. The landless families, according to the 1922 survey, "live in poorer houses, they live under worse sanitary conditions, have poorer health, and lose more of their children by death than (land) owners do. They are more illiterate, fail to reach as high grades in school, take less papers and magazines, have fewer books in their homes, attend church and Sunday school less, have fewer home amusements, and attend community affairs less often."

Farmers in three North Carolina counties in three distinctly different geographical regions of the state were the subjects of the 1922 N.C. Department of Agriculture study. Government workers interviewed 1,014 sharecroppers and their families, inventorying their lives in order to get a factual picture of the plight of poor farmers in the state. The findings were sobering.

The plight of these people barely keeping body and soul together on the margins of North Carolina society were part of a vicious cycle that demonstrated the failings of the agricultural ladder. Eighty-one percent of landowners surveyed in 1922 were the sons of landowners, while seventy percent of landless farmers shared the same

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status of their landless fathers. Only half the landed farmers had ever been landless. Even though almost twenty-eight percent of landowners had started at the bottom of the agricultural ladder, it was not uncommon for farmers to climb a rung or two, perhaps achieving the status of cash tenants, only to suffer some disaster that saw them fall back to the bottom again. Among tenants, some sixty percent of them started out as sharecroppers. For

at best.

Landowners seemed to hold all the cards when it came to farming in 1922 North Carolina. Although they accounted for a little less than half of those surveyed by the Department of Agriculture, they held almost ninety-three percent of all wealth, and an equal amount of all equity. Even though white families amounted to only seventy-three percent of families surveyed, they held ninety-two percent of wealth

Like other places in the South, the biggest stumbling block to successfully climbing the agricultural ladder was the lack of credit. For most sharecroppers, credit sources were scarce aside from the merchants and landowners. In the three North Carolina counties surveyed, they were the sources of almost ninety-five percent of all credit issued. Banks accounted for an anemic two percent of credit lent to state farmers.



Sharecropper dwellings were often rudimentary at best, with wooden or dirt floors and walls that allowed wind and other weather to intrude on those residing in the interior. Sharecropper homes were often the same as or a small step above the sort of houses slaves lived in during the antebellum era, as seen in this photo of black sharecroppers in the early 1900s.

those who did manage to become small landowners, the journey took on average thirteen years of toil as croppers and tenants. Given that the average age of the North Carolina sharecroppers and tenants surveyed in 1922 was thirty-six, the likelihood of any of those farmers ever becoming owners was remote

and ninety-four percent of all equity. Among Negro farmers surveyed, twenty-seven percent were tenants. For whites, that number was a bit smaller, at twenty-five percent. But among Negro croppers, fully twenty-two percent were insolvent, while that number was just three percent for white farmers.

Among the farmers surveyed in the state, the 1,014 families used a combined \$185,000 in credit over the course of the year, or an average \$182.40 per family. More than half that credit went to buy food, clothing, and home supplies. The rest went to buying stock, seed, fertilizer, and tools. Among the

landless, sixty-two percent of their credit was used for living purposes, as opposed to almost forty-four percent among the landed. Such numbers indicate that among North Carolina's landless farmers, a higher percentage of borrowed money went for perishable and consumable goods rather than for production goods. With interest rates charged by non-bank lenders reaching as high as twenty-five percent (or thirty-four percent for black farmers), using crop shares to get out of debt was a virtual impossibility.

Life for landless farmers in North Carolina, even before the Great Depression made things so much worse, was already a virtual subsistence existence. By every measureable metric sharecroppers, and to a lesser degree tenants, were the poorest constituents in the state. Statewide among sharecroppers, there were a hundred beds for every 199 people. Nearly all sharecropper homes staved off freezing winters with fireplaces. Those same homes were almost universally lit by oil lamps. They had no kitchens, or even refrigerators. Nearly twenty percent had no screens for windows or doors to keep disease-carrying insects outside or let cooling breezes in. More than half of all sharecropper homes were covered in tar paper, while 135 of those families surveyed lived in homes that used newspaper stuffed in gaps between boards to keep chilly breezes at bay. In nearly sixteen percent of the homes, yards drained towards the family well, contaminating drinking and bathing water. A quarter of the homes surveyed had privies, but only half of those had ever been cleaned out. Almost thirty percent

of all homes surveyed dumped their used dishwater and garbage in the yard. To say life was hard for North Carolina sharecroppers was a big understatement.



The Southern Tenant Farmers Union (logo above) saw both black and white farmers unite for better terms and conditions.

Desperate times call for desperate measures, and the plight of tenants and sharecroppers of both races in the Depression-era South lead to an attempt at organization to spur reforms. The Sharecroppers and Tenant Farmer's Union (STFU) was the result. By 1936, the union boasted 31,000 members in Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma,

and North Carolina (though North Carolina only had one local).

Such an organization was sorely needed. The STFU united poor whites, blacks, Mexicans, and Indians under the same banner. Where once landlords and planter elites could count on a racial divide to keep sharecroppers and tenants from organizing to force concessions, the STFU helped laborers recognize that poor whites and blacks had more in common than the differences posed by the color of their skin. The STFU may have been the first organization to unite disparate races under one banner to pursue common interests in American labor history.

The STFU marked a big change in white attitudes. Before, white farmers resented having to compete for jobs that previously went to blacks. Lingering resentment of Negro rule during Reconstruction also soured white relations with blacks who, except for their skin, lived virtually identical lives as them. The bad times in rural North Carolina were made worse when the Great Depression saw jobless factory workers move



Farmers who joined the STFU recognized that at least economically, despite racial differences, poor farmers had more in common with each other than not.

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"We live under the same sun, eat the same food, wear the same kind of clothing, work on the same land, raise the same crop for the same landlord who oppresses and cheats us both."

- Black North Carolina sharecropper

back to the country to try farming for a living. The ensuing labor glut saw between eight and twelve thousand North Carolina sharecropping families displaced by 1934, people who had no crops to sell.

Under such conditions, racial biases began taking a back seat to mutual interest. It was from this that the STFU saw its genesis. "We live under the same sun, eat the same food, wear the same kind of clothing, work on the same land, raise the same crop for the same landlord who oppresses and cheats us both," said one old black North Carolina sharecropper. "The same chain that holds my people holds your people too...The landlord is always betwixt us, beatin' us and starvin' us and makin' us fight each other. There ain't but one way, that's for us to get together and stay together."

The STFU sought better living conditions for sharecroppers and tenants, including decent homes and access to woodlands for the firewood needed to fend off harsh winters. They wanted portions of the land they worked to be set aside for garden plots to supplement the family diet, free schools with books and hot lunches, and decent contracts that paid higher wages, offered better hours, an end to evictions, and the right to sell their portion of the cotton crop to whoever they wanted at the best market prices they could find. None of which set well with landlords, who certainly did not want to undertake reforms that would take money from their pocket. Sending cropper children to school was seen as especially odious, because educated children were not likely to take their parents' places in the fields. White landlords viewed the STFU with fear and anger. They mobilized to combat the union with white supremacy and other terror tactics. These included sending armed thugs to STFU meetings, beatings, threatening families, increased evictions, and even murder.

Shaw College student William Thomas Brown founded North Carolina's lone chapter of the STFU in 1936. Its membership was comprised initially of just six black tobacco farmers. Brown admitted reticence about approaching whites to join the union. "I wouldn't dare say anything to whites," he said, "because if you brought a white (to a meeting) you wouldn't know if he was an informer."

The STFU failed to accomplish much in the grand scheme of things, outside of focusing attention on the plight of sharecroppers and tenants in the South. The union was undone by a number of factors, including the inability of poor farmers to take time away from their fields to attend meetings. Landowner-backed violence, the indifference of the Roosevelt administration at the federal level, a weak financial base, and ultimately, the mechanization of cotton

farming, all contributed to STFU's eventual disappearance. In North Carolina, Brown was unable to make more of an impact because of the lingering impact of Old South social mores and a lack of white organizers to broaden the membership base across racial lines.

By the 1920s, it was apparent to even the most disinterested observer that the inequities of sharecropping and tenant farming were abominable. The Great Depression only exacerbated an already dismal way of life for thousands of people in rural North Carolina. But the agricultural ladder system was deeply entrenched in the Southern farming world. University of North Carolina sociologist Rupert B. Vance observed in 1929 that the system, whether equitable or not, was one that had been worked out by landowners and tenant in both custom and law. Financial interests, he argued, were at the root of the South's reliance on cotton. Farmers did not choose to grow cotton every year. Their creditors demanded it. There was no credit available for the seed and fertilizer needed to grow anything else. "Change will have to be engineered from above by bankers, landlords, and supply merchants," Vance surmised. Such reforms only came when Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal reshaped the American landscape.

The New Deal was in-

tended to provide a safety net and optimism for the downtrodden American masses left destitute and drowning as a result of the Great Depression. If anyone fit that description, it would be North Carolina' sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Instead, the way New Deal programs were put into practice served only to reinforce the existing power structure in the South. New programs like the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), designed to provide relief and a fair shake for poor farmers, were put in the hands of local elites who sat on committees overseeing its implementation. Those local power brokers, often the same men who were landlords to poor farmers, wielded that authority to steer monies intended for sharecroppers and tenants into their own pockets. Another noted North Carolina sociologist, Arthur Raper, declared that "practically all of the (AAA) money found its way into the hands of the landlord. One half of it belonged to him as rent, while the other half was used to reduce the tenants' indebtedness to him for furnishings."

AAA policies hurt sharecroppers and tenants who suffered evictions when landowners took acreage out of production. The idea behind paying farmers to let lands lay fallow was to artificially boost cotton and tobacco prices by reducing the glut of the crops that depressed markets for them. But such payments went to the landowner, not the sharecroppers and tenants who actually tilled

Adjustment Act into law.

that land. Once a landowner accepted payment to take acreage out of production, any incentive he had to keep laborers on his land disappeared. Those who were allowed to stay were reduced to being wage laborers.

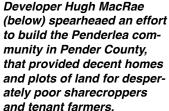
Landowners enjoyed huge windfalls at the expense of their laborers thanks to the perversion of AAA policies. At the same time, they protested Federal relief programs that took profits away from their stores during growing seasons. Yet when those growing seasons ended, landowners again became enthusiastic supporters of government relief because they did not want to support their tenants any longer than they had to. Apparently things changed from the growing season (when landowners

claimed government relief would make already lazy tenants even more shiftless), to the offseason. when the landowner could milk no more profit from his workers.

Some laborers found help by hiring out with other Federal employers such as the Civilian Conservation Corp, or in programs by the Works Progress Administration. Such programs under Roosevelt's New Deal put unemployed farmers and others back on the job, with payrolls that offered at least as much as they stood to make as sharecroppers or tenants. Civic improvement projects such as Wilmington, N.C.'s Legion Stadium and Greenfield Lake benefitted from their labors.

> Even more ambitious programs aimed







specifically at poor farmers began cropping up in the countryside. Near Burgaw, N.C., roughly twenty miles northwest of Wilmington in Pender County, developer Hugh MacRae suggested to Federal officials that the Division of Subsistence Homesteads construct a planned community designed to provide homes and work for poor sharecropping and tenant farmers, bankrupt landowners, and unemployed ex-farmers. The government agreed, and Penderlea Homesteads became one of 135 such communities built by the U.S. government during the depths of the Great Depression to provide a lifeline to desperate citizens nationwide.

Beginning in 1934, MacRae headed up the project on behalf of the U.S. Department of Interior. The developer's prior experience establishing farming communities in southeastern North Carolina made him eminently suitable to

spearhead the effort to build Penderlea. Using designs by Boston city planner John Nolan, MacRae began building a community shaped like a horseshoe surrounding a central road on 4,700 acres of cut-over woodland. MacRae sold the land to the Federal government for \$6.50 per acre. The ten acre community was intended to accommodate 300 people in a planned truck farm cooperative with its own fields and processing facilities.

Families at Penderlea worked ten-acre plots that faced the main road, with small homes nearby. Wooded areas, ditches, or creeks that provided water sources bounded each homestead. Families lived in houses with running water and electricity. Each ten acres boasted a barn and a poultry house. There was also an A-type hog house, corn crib, and a combination wash and smoke house. Homes ranged from four to six rooms, depending on the size of the family. An electric pump powered a reservoir that provided hot and cold water. The houses themselves were built on brick footings, with cedar shingle exteriors and tongue and groove pine interior walls and floors.

A school on a twenty-three acre campus, with a gymnasium,

auditorium, cafeteria, library, and workshop, served the larger community. Plans included a vegetable grading shed, potato storage house, a cannery, grist and feed mill, a general store, social building, and furniture factory. Nearby Watha, Burgaw, and Wallace all had railheads served by hard surface roads to provide a means of getting Penderlea produce to market. By 1936, families began moving into the community. It was a far, far better life than any of the former sharecropping families had ever lived before.

Government programs allowed former sharecroppers and tenants to work to own their Penderlea homesteads. By 1937, 112 families occupied houses in the development. Penderlea shifted to the Resettlement Administration that summer, and families continued to slowly find their way to Pender County to take up residence there. The success of the community was highlighted by a visit from First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in August 1937. Penderlea, despite some growing pains over the next decade, existed with government support until 1949. The community succeeded in providing fresh starts for families who would never have had a chance at a decent life otherwise. Ninety-nine of the original Penderlea homes still stand at the site, along with the community center that was the nexus of the neighborhood.

Sharecropping and tenant farming continued in the South long after World War II completed the job of recovery started by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his Democratic allies in Congress. As late as the 1970s, there were still people tilling the soil on shares in the Carolinas, raising tobacco and other cash crops. While such people still had hard lives that often qualified as little more than subsistence living (some still did not have indoor plumbing until 1973 or later), they still lived better in most cases than their predecessors of the 1920s and 1930s.

There are many kinds of slavery. Abraham Lincoln may have done away with one form of it with his great proclamation in 1863, but the Jim Crow institutionalized by a South determined to cling to prerogatives and power from the antebellum era codified a system that was in many ways slavery in all but name. Certainly the landless poor, both black and white, who toiled from "can see to cain't" in cotton and tobacco fields owned by other men must have felt the burden of something that seemed a lot like slavery, or at least indentured servitude. They often lived in conditions that not even convicts were condemned to suffer, trying to earn their way in a system rigged to keep them in their place. North Carolina was but one Southern state that had to contend with large segments of its rural population that literally lived hand to mouth, their day-to-day existence

far from guaranteed, with no safety net to catch those who lost their grip on that precarious stability. Relief came only when the depths of the Great Depression spurred the Roosevelt administration to create programs that helped pull a reeling nation up from the pit of despair.

- NOTES -

- 1. Joseph D. Reid, Jr. "Sharecropping As An Understandable Market Response: The Post-Bellum South." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Mar 1973): 109.Hereafter cited as Reid.
- 2. Lee Alston. "Competition and Compensation of Sharecroppers by Race: A View From Plantations in the Early Twentieth Century." *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 38 (2001): 187. http://www.idealibrary.com (accessed 01 Sept 2014). Hereafter cited as Alston. For instance, in Alabama, an 1866 black code made it unlawful for "any person to interfere with, hire, employ, of entice away, of induce to leave the service of another, any laborer or servant who shall have stipulated or contracted, in writing, to serve for any given period."
- Alston, 188. Figures from the 1910 Federal Census showed that in the South Atlantic region, fifty-five percent of white and fifty-one percent of black farm workers had been on the same farm for less than one year.
- 3. Carl C. Taylor and Carle Clark Zimmerman and Benjamin F. Brown, editors. Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers. Based on a Survey of 1000 North Carolina Farmers in Three Typical Counties of the State. Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Agriculture, 1922. http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/ncfarmers/farmers.html (accessed 01 Sept 2014):
- 31. Hereafter cited as Taylor.
- 4. Taylor, 5.
- 5. William O'Neal. "The Emergence of the Crop-Lien System in North Carolina." East Carolina University prize-winning history paper. http://thescholarship.ecu.edu/handle/10342/3795?show=full (accessed 06 Sept 2014). Hereafter cited as O'Neal.

- 6. O'Neal, 14.
- 7. O'Neal, 11-12.
- 8. O'Neal, 15.
- 9. O'Neal, 16.
- 10. Ralph Shlomowitz. "The Origins of Southern Sharecropping." *Agricultural History*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July 1979): 563-569.
- 11. O'Neal, 15-16.
- 12. Reid, 106. Southern per capita income in 1880 was only fifty-one percent of the rest of the country. By 1900, the growth in income had slowed even more.
- 13. Martin A. Garrett and Zhenui Xu. "The Efficiency of Sharecropping: Evidence from the Postbellum South." Southern Economic Journal, Vol. 69, No. 3 (Jan. 2003): 579. Hereafter cited as Garrett. 14. Marjorie Mendenhall Applewhite. "Sharecropper and Tenant in the Courts of North Carolina." The North Carolina Historical Review, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April 1954): 134. In the turpentine industry, a crop was a unit of measurement. Ten thousand boxes or faces (the cuts made in a longleaf pine tree to access the sap from which turpentine was distilled) equaled a crop. Originally a crop included roughly 5,000 trees (a number which rose to 9,000 later). "Croppers" tended their small forests on shares, splitting profits with the landowner.
- 15. Alston, 182-184.
- 16. Reid, 126; Garrett, 579, 592.
- 17. Gilbert C. Fite. "The Agricultural Trap in the South." *Agricultural History*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Autumn 1986): 38. Hereafter cited as Fite.
- 18. Fite, 39-40. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was difficult for Southern farmers to begin farming, and once they did, to become successful operators. What money that was available for loans carried interest rates that made earning a profit all but impossible. Making enough to enjoy a modern standard of living was completely out of reach.
- 19. Fite, 41-43.
- 20. Fite, 43. Accumulations of capital were usually accomplished through savings and earnings, but the amount saved depended on income. While small landowners and tenants might manage to build some savings, for sharecroppers and wage laborers it was almost impossible.
- 21. Fite, 44.
- 22. Alston, 182; Fite, 45-49.

- Carolina Chronicles -

- 23. Jack Temple Kirby. "Black and White in the Rural South, 1915-1954." Agricultural History, Vol. 58, No. 3 (July 1984): 411. Hereafter cited as Kirby.
- 24. Kirby, 412-413.
- 25. Kirby, 413. On the other hand, not all black tenants were invariably unhappy with their lot as sharecroppers. Records show more than a few who found their white landlords tolerant men who lived up to their obligations under contract fairly. A black sharecropper from the same area that Weathers lived said that "The men I've had crops with has always talked to me kind and treated me like I was a man... It ain't the landlords I'm complainin' about...It's sharecropping that's wrong."
- 26. Kirby, 413.
- 27. Kirby, 414.
- 28. Kirby, 417, 420.
- 29. Kirby, 420.
- 30. Taylor, passim.
- 31. Taylor, 5, 11, 12.
- 32. Taylor, passim. The study was conducted in Edgecombe County in the Coastal Plains, Chatham County in the N.C. Piedmont, and Madison County in the mountainous western part of the state.
- 33. Taylor, 6-7.
- 34. Taylor, 36-38.
- 35. Taylor, 34.
- 36. Taylor, 30-31.
- 37. Taylor, passim.
- 38. Keith M. Griffin. "The Failure of an Interracial Southern Rhetoric: The Southern Tenant Farmer's Union in North Carolina." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Carolinas Speech Communication Association. October 1982: 3. Hereafter cited as Griffin.
- 39. Griffin. 6.
- 40. Griffin, 7-11.
- 41. Griffin. 12.
- 42. Griffin, 9-13.
- 43. Monica Richmond Gisolfi. "From Crop Lien to Contract Farming: The Roots of the Agribusiness in the American South, 1929-1930." Agricultural History, Vol. 80, No. 2 (Spring 2006): 170. Hereafter cited as Gisolfi.
- 44. Gisolfi, 174. It was not just sharecroppers and tenant farmers who suffered under the elite administration of AAA assets by local elites. Small landowners endured forced acreage reductions that reduced the amount of cotton they had for subsistence. In contrast, large farmers and landowners raked in huge profits thanks to their posi-

tions on local AAA committees. 45. Gisolfi, 174-175.

"Facts About Penderlea Homestead." Penderlea Homestead Museum. http:// www.penderleahomesteadmuseum.org/ facts.html (accessed 16 October 2014). Hereafter cited as Penderlea.

46. Penderlea. MacRae had previous experience developing farm communities. He was also the driving force behind Castle Hayne, St. Helena, and Van Eeden, all of which were built around truck farming. 47. Penderlea, passim.

Have a story idea? Let us know!

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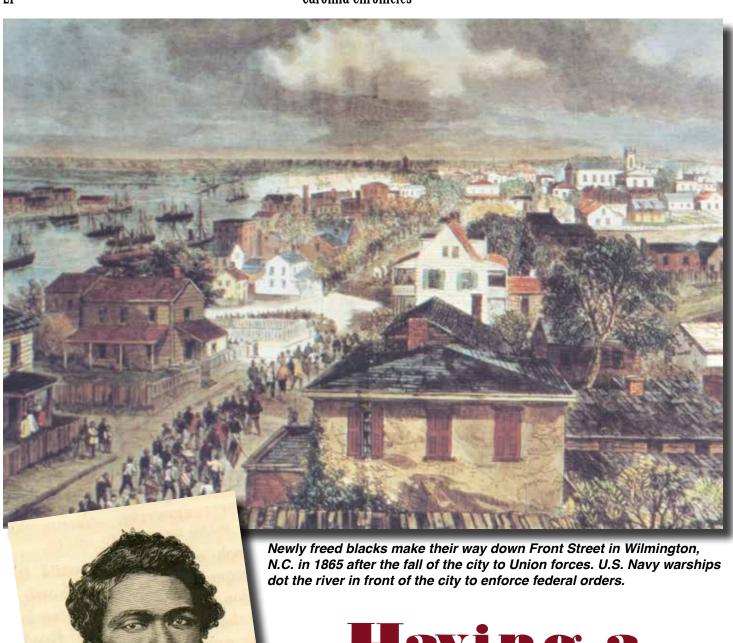
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Having a Voice:

AFTER THE FALL OF WILMINGTON, N.C. IN 1865, FORMER SLAVES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THEIR NEW FREEDOM TO EXERCISE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER UNHEARD OF BEFORE UNION TROOPS SET UP SHOP IN THE PORT CITY. BUT THE NEWFOUND BLACK FREEDOM WOULD SOON SLIP AWAY UNDER THE PRESSURES OF JIM CROW

Former slave turned elected representative Abraham Galloway.

By Jack E. Fryar, Jr

hen Union troops crossed Eagles Island in the early spring of 1865 to seal the fate of the last open port of the Confederacy, newly freed slaves took to the streets of Wilmington, North Carolina in droves to celebrate the fact of their emancipation. Under the watchful eyes of federal soldiers and their bayonets, blacks began forging a new identity as participants in the democracy that saw free men choose their own representatives in government. It was a new, heady feeling for a class of people that not too long before had been consigned to lives of servitude in the rice fields of the plantations along the Cape Fear River. In the years to come, before the erosion of civil rights progress ushered in the virtual slavery of Jim Crow, Wilmington blacks managed to achieve a degree of political success that was the envy of other North Carolina and Southern blacks outside the Tar Heel State. But that success was not without its difficulties.

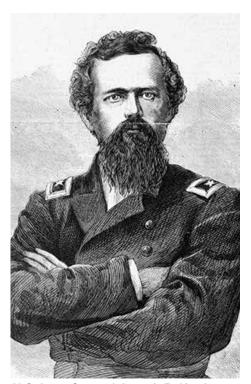
Immediately after the fall of Wilmington, the city became an occupied port under the sway of Union Gen. Joseph Hawley and the blue-clad soldiers - many of them U.S. Colored Troops – who gave weight to his edicts. Hawley, a North Carolina-born soldier who eventually became governor of Connecticut, pursued a policy that saw secessionist plantations confiscated and divided among the recently freed slaves who used to work them. Hawley understood the caste system that existed in the lower Cape Fear, one that was common among the landed gentry of the former Confederacy across the South. No edict from the Yankee capital would prompt these men to surrender what, to them, was theirs by birth and Divine right. But the political plans of the United States government did not always adhere to the vision of its assassinated wartime leader once Andrew Johnson assumed the presidency.¹

Former Vice President Andrew Johnson was a Southerner, a Tennessean whose initial inclination was to punish the former Confederates harshly. But members of his cabinet prevailed on the new president to follow the example set by his predecessor and show leniency and forgiveness to the rebelling Southern states. Truth be told, many of Johnson's sympathies lay with the vanquished property owners of the South.2 Under his administration, many of the post-war strictures preventing whites from resuming their dominant positions in society were reversed. In Wilmington, Hawley was replaced with Gen. John Worthington Ames.³ Under orders from Washington, Ames removed former slaves from their new homes on the sub-divided plantation lands along the Cape Fear River and returned the properties to their former owners. It was perhaps the most significant indication that Abraham Lincoln's promise of freedom might not be as easy to achieve as it was to make.

Almost overnight, control of Wilmington government was returned to those who had occupied city offices before Braxton Bragg's Confederates withdrew in 1865. By 1868, new Black Codes were instituted that replaced the plantation's iron shackles with the bonds of law and municipal code. This return to slavery in all but name did not sit

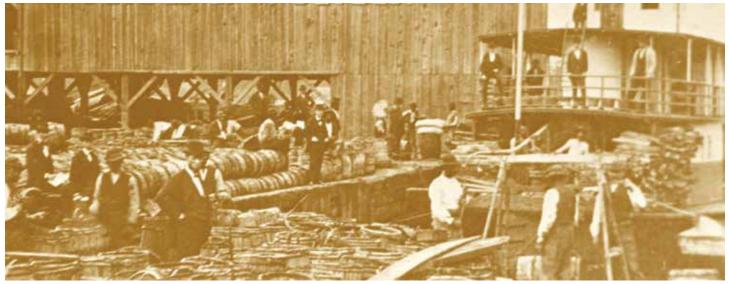
well with the black population of the city. Three riots rocked Wilmington between 1865 and 1868, and despite violent reprisals from conservatives who sought to put them in their place, blacks in North Carolina's largest city carried out efforts to organize and be politically active.⁴

As 1867 dawned, Wilmington blacks and a small number of white Unionists joined forces to form the Republican Party. This was no small thing, as those who supported the old guard fought at



N.C.-born General Joseph R. Hawley supervised the Freedman's Bureau and occupation of Wilmington after the city fell in 1865.

every step to prevent blacks from enjoying any of the freedoms the war supposedly bought them.⁵ Under Ames' administration, the military government was often complicit in allowing great latitude to those who would actively work to keep the city's blacks in what they saw as their rightful place. A blind eye was turned to the illegal activi-



Though plantation jobs dried up after the war, Cape Fear blacks found plenty of work in new industries that cropped up such as a rejuvenated naval stores industry (above), general merchandising, and service industries like restaurants and saloons.

ties of the Ku Klux Klan, who used intimidation and worse to make their point that blacks in Wilmington forgot their place at their peril. Nevertheless, after enjoying a taste of freedom under Gen. Hawley's oversight, blacks were reluctant to surrender it. Wilmington blacks took steps to preserve what they could of their newfound liberty.⁶

By 1868, conservative influence in the nation's capital began to wane. In elections that year to the convention to ratify North Carolina's new constitution. Republicans carried all the counties of the southeastern part of the state except Columbus County. When it became apparent that conservative local governments in the southeastern part of the state had dug in their heels to resist every step towards black enfranchisement, Washington, D.C. put pressure on Raleigh to secure compliance. Governor William W. Holden, the former newspaperman who had opposed secession, used the threat of military intervention to bring local governments along the Cape Fear into line 7

While they had been dragged kicking and screaming from their perch at the top of the social, political, and economic hierarchy of the lower Cape Fear by government edict and military managers who, for the most part, had little sympathy for their plight, the old money of the planter class that reigned before and during the Civil War were still potent actors on the political stage during Reconstruction. The size of their pocketbooks, diminished but still sizeable, insured that. But the new



Gov. William W. Holden proved a friend to freedmen.

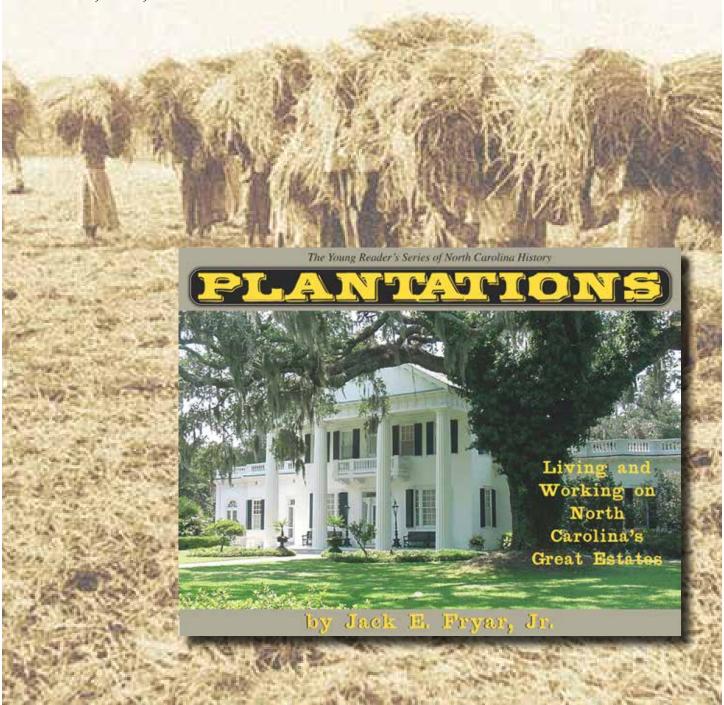
kings of the hill in the region were men who moved to the Cape Fear either a short time before the war, or in the vacuum of the post-war era, when the old order was still in disarray with the defeat of the Confederacy. These "carpetbaggers" saw that rice was no longer viable in a slaveless South, and sought to make their fortunes in other areas. These included general business and the naval stores industry, as well as by cotton, shipping, and railroads. Cape Fear blacks found plenty of work in these industries, but in no case did they reach a level of wealth that made them competitive with their white neighbors. Illiteracy, discrimination, disorganization, and a lack of effort on the part of the federal government to insure a level playing field left them in large part limited to menial labor. Black leaders, understanding that they simply could not match the economic power of the white establishment, opted instead for political parity.8

Among the newcomers to Wilmington were some blacks who, either with backing from

Coming Soon from

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lantations were a way of life along North Carolina's Cape Fear River for centuries. The latest addition to the *Young Reader's Series of North Carolina History* takes you inside the great estates that made fortunes off of naval stores, rice, and cotton.



Northern whites or of their own design, entered into business. These men, like saloon owner George Moore, catered to a black clientele. Moore's saloon became a gathering place for city blacks, who used his bar as a forum to discuss politics and other issues in an environment that allowed for much freer exleaders. In 1868, the party went so far as to put up several candidates more suited to the conservative agenda than what the Republicans ostensibly stood for. It was an effort to capture the support and votes of business leaders in Wilmington, especially among the Germans and Jews. The tactic failed,

and Cape Fear business sided almost entirely with the Democrats.10

Black business owners in Wilmington were enthusiastic participants in the politics of the era. In part, this was due to the fringe benefits that came of having political con-O. Lowrey, for instance, operated a carriage making business for years after the war. but not until he

nections. James secured a con-

tract with the federal government to repair their carriages in 1878, did R.G. Dun's credit reports show him as earning "\$1200 per annum in the U.S. Customs House," where he also had an office. Dun had listed Lowrey as a dubious credit risk up to that point, but their opinion changed after Lowrey secured the government job.11

While the two political philosophies - one rooted in the

past, the other looking to a future of black equality and inclusion contested each other at every turn, with economics playing a large part in which party the deep-pocketed business leaders supported, blacks did manage to make some gains politically. Of New Hanover County's 6,258 registered voters in the 1868 election, 3,968 were Republicans. Cape Fear blacks took to politics with enthusiasm, and met with a fair amount of success despite the obstacles in their way.¹²

Abraham Galloway, a Wilmington black who escaped slavery to become a spy for the Union Army in the war, was one of three local delegates elected to the constitutional convention in 1868. A year later, Solomon Nash and other local blacks led the city's delegation at the Republican convention in Wilmington. During the 1870s and 1880s, Republicans in Wilmington's predominantly black First, Third, and Fourth Wards nominated black candidates for virtually every government office and post that came open. In 1869 election results saw the Republicans garner 68 percent of the vote, but the candidates who assumed office were mostly white businessmen running on the Republican ticket. Still, at least they were Republican, and not openly hostile to black issues 13

In Raleigh, it was soon a different story. Democrats took control of the state government in 1877, and control of offices at the local level in Wilmington and New Hanover County soon followed.14 As the 1880s drew to a close, there was a rift developing in the Republican Party along race lines. and this led to the creation of the



The U.S. Customs House, where James Lowrey secured a good federal job.

pression that did black churches. During the late 1860s and through the 1870s, blacks fought with conservatives (who in 1876 tried to rebrand themselves, adopting the name Democrats) to win the favor of the Cape Fear's business class. It was these men who had the money, and by extension controlled the path to political power.9

Republican leaders had varied success wooing the business

A Sampling of Politically Active Wilmington Blacks, 1865-1898

- Henry Brewington Republican politician in Reconstruction. Wilmington magistrate (1870s), represented the city's First Ward on the Republican Executive Committee in 1878. Special police deputy, fireman.
- Owen Burney Wilmington alderman (1870), seven-time candidate for New Hanover County Sheriff, Inspector of the U.S. Custom House (1879-80), New Hanover County treasurer (1882).
- James K. Cutlar Inspector of Naval Stores (1870), Republican representative of the Fourth Ward on the New Hanover County Executive Committee (1887).
- James Benson Dudley Register of Deeds, New Hanover County (1891), delegate to Republican National Convention (1896).

- John S.W. Eagles former Union soldier, came to Wilmington in after the war. Member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1869).
- Allen Evans Wilmington city registrar and election judge (1870)
- Abraham Galloway Delegate to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention (1868), senator from New Hanover County in the N.C. Senate (1868-70).
- **Eustace E. Green** N.C. House (1883).
- Joseph Corbin Hill During Reconstruction, served at one time or another as a constable, Register of Deeds, Justice of the Peace, registrar and judge of elections, and city clerk (1871).
- John Holloway Justice of the Peace (1889), N.C. House (1887 and 1889).

- William J. Kellogg City alderman (1868), Executive Committee of the Republican Party (1868).
- James Lowrey Registrar and election judge (1869-1870), magistrate (1871), New Hanover County Commissioner (1872), Wilmington Board of Aldermen (1869, 1879).
- William H. Moore N.C. House (1874-1875), N.C. Senate (1876-1877).
- Solomon W. Nash, Jr. Justice of the Peace (1869) and New Hanover County Jailer (1869-1884), Justice of the Peace (1868), candidate for N.C. House (1876).

Independent Faction of the Republican Party. Wilmington's white Republicans, who were dubbed the "Courthouse Ring" by black dissenters within the party, were businessmen (often "carpetbaggers" from the North) who seemed most concerned with advancing their pro-business agenda, relegating economic, social, and political equality for blacks to something secondary.15 These men, despite their focus on business, were instrumental in many of the gains that blacks saw in the aftermath of the war.16

The Independent Faction called themselves the "true-blue" faction of the party, whose loyalty lay with the state and national party ticket and platform. James O. Lowrey and George W. Price led the breakaways from the Republican mainstream in the local party.¹⁷ When Gov. Daniel Russell wrote the State Executive Committee that North Carolina blacks were unfit to hold office, the rift between the two factions became a chasm. Cape Fear blacks immediately drafted a newspaper article rebuffing the Republican governor for the slight,



Brunswick County's Gov. Daniel Russell

AS BLACK POLITICS BECAME FRACTIOUS, WHITE CONSERVATIVES IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY SAW AN OPENING TO OUST A RACE OF PEOPLE THEY SAW AS INFERIOR FROM THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE. THEIR EFFORTS TO DO JUST THAT LED TO THE BLOODSHED AND POLITICAL COUP OF 1898 IN WILMINGTON.

and soon after held an Independent Republican convention at the county courthouse, in which Lowrey presided over the nomination of an all-black slate of candidates for the next election.¹⁸

The split in the Republican Party played into the hands of conservative elements in Cape Fear politics. While white Republicans continued to reach office on a consistent basis thanks to black voters who, while perhaps less than enamored with their attitudes, still preferred them to the Democratic alternative, Independent Republicans managed to win some races, but only a few due to the splintered nature of the party. It was not until the party joined with disaffected farmers to form the Populist Party that black candidates began to see real gains in terms of political office holders. This fusion of poor whites and blacks created a voting block that had real power at the polls, something neither group had managed to achieve on their own. Seeing which way the wind was blowing, Republicans quickly joined the Populists, and the resulting party their union created ushered in the era of Fusionist politics in North Carolina.19

Black political activism was widespread, found on porches and in pulpits across New Hanover County. In saloons and on street corners, Cape Fear blacks took an active and enthusiastic part in political contests that had real, immediate impact on their lives. Conserva-

tive opponents railed against them, and tried to frame the argument so that white fears of black misogyny would dull the threat of poor whites joining Republican ranks. It was one of the strongest weapons in their bag of dirty tricks, as they certainly could not depend on economic arguments to sway common whites to the Democratic cause.²⁰

But there was still dissension in the Republican Party, with blacks feeling that their concerns were not being addressed by the mainstream. In response they began forming political clubs to voice their point of view.²¹ As black politics became fractious, white conservatives in the Democratic Party saw an opening to oust a race of people they saw as inferior from the political landscape. Their efforts to do just that led to the bloodshed and political coup of 1898 in Wilmington.

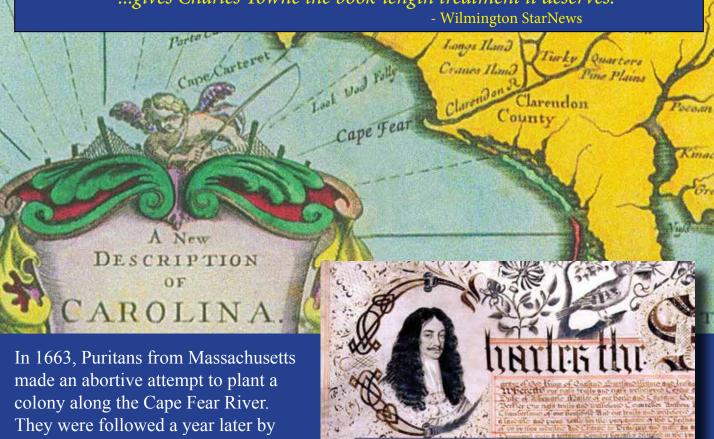
- Notes -

- 1. Dictionary of American Biography; Putnam, Albert D., ed. Major General Joseph R. Hawley, Soldier and Editor (1826-1905): Civil War Military Letters. Hartford: Connecticut Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964. Hawley was born in Laurinburg, N.C. to a Presbyterian minister father from New Haven. The Hawleys returned to Connecticut in 1837.
- 2. William McKee Evans. *Ballots and Fence Rails: Reconstruction on the lower Cape Fear*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967: 249, hereafter cited as Evans.
- 3. Ibid. Ames was a former officer on Hawley's staff and a conservative reconstructionist who, like his civilian masters in Washington, D.C., upheld every proper-

- ty right except that of slavery.
- 4. Evans, 250.
- 5. James A. McDuffie, "Politics in Wilmington and New Hanover County, North Carolina, 1865-1900: The Genesis of a Race Riot," Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1979: 64. According to McDuffie, Conservatives saw the Republican upstarts as "a dangerous alliance of inferior blacks, incompetent whites, and traitorous Unionists."
- 6. Evans, 250. Among the steps Wilmington's blacks took included secreting arms and ammunition in places where the Klan and others who sought to oppose their integration into the American landscape on equal terms with whites.
- 7. Evans, 251.
- 8. Ibid.
- 9. Robert C. Kenzer, "The Black Businessman in the Postwar South: North Carolina, 1865-1880." The Business History Review. Vol. 63, No. 1, Entrepreneurs in Business History (Spring 1989): 61-87, hereafter cited as Kenzer. Ledgers of the R.G. Dun Credit Rating Service show 126 black businesses in operation in N.C. between 1865 and 1880. New Hanover County, which census records show was 57.9% black, boasted eight firms doing business in 1865-1867. These firms were likely owned by pre-war free blacks, who would have had a head start on business capital with which to found new enterprises over recently freed ex-slaves.
- 10. Evans, 253-254.
- 11. Kenzer, 74. Dun's re-evaluation of James Lowrey concluded that was a "Very worthy colored man, said to be a good workman, who has occupied himself with politics and enjoyed an office in the Customs House which is a sinecure." Lowrey later boosted his favorable rating even more in the eyes of the Northern credit evaluators when he became a Wilmington alderman. He was not alone. Of the eight black businesses listed in Dun's ledgers, half of them were owned by men who would hold offices at either the local level or in the state legislature.

South Carolina has the famous one, but North Carolina had the first one...

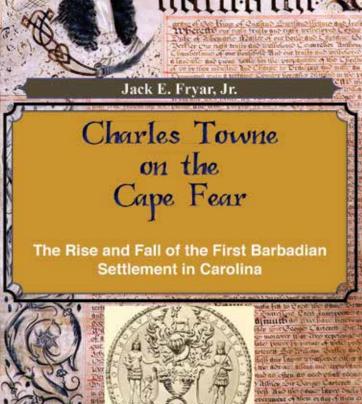
"...gives Charles Towne the book-length treatment it deserves." - Wilmington StarNews



Barbadians led by John Vassall. The Barbadians spread up and down he Cape Fear River in what became the first English colony below the Albemarle, according to some sources as many as 800 strong. But world events and circumstance conspired to doom the fledgling settlement in modern Brunswick County, N.C. In this first book to address the rise and fall of that first Charles Towne, author Jack Fryar tells the fascinating story of the colony that could have been.



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12. Karin L. Zipf, "The Whites Shall Rule the Land or Die': Race and Class in North Carolina Reconstruction Politics." *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Aug. 1999): 499-534, hereafter cited as Zipf. A fair number of these were common whites, who to the Conservatives' chagrin, sided with the Republicans against their wealthy white race mates.

13. Bill Reeves. Strength Through Struggle: The Chronological and Historical Record of the African-American Community in Wilmington, North Carolina, 1865-1950. Wilmington, N.C.: New Hanover County Public Library, 1998: 239; hereafter cited as Reeves. New Hanover County's population was 58 percent black in 1868.

14. Zipf, 505. Democrat-leaning newspapers explained the loses at the polls by claiming blacks from western North Carolina were relocating to eastern counties and skewing the electorate in favor of Republicans.

15. Zipf. The Democrats in the state legislature enacted a bill in 1877 that removed control of local elections and from New Hanover County politicos – who were overwhelmingly Republican – and placed it in the hands of their conservative brethren in the state house.

16. Reeves, 240. The white Republicans, though not actively hostile to black concerns, were more concerned in many instances with what was good for business. They were also of the opinion that the Cape Fear's largely unschooled black population was unfit to govern themselves, and so should loyally cast their votes for their white party mates without actually participating in the political process. 17. Jack B. Scroggs, "Carpetbagger Constitutional Reform in the South Atlantic States, 1867-1868." The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Nov. 1961): 475-493. For instance, "carpetbagger" leadership of ten of the nineteen committees tasked with drawing up the state's new post-war constitution facilitated many elements that were of benefit to blacks and poor whites alike, such as the provision for public education.

18. Reeves, 241. The Independents declared that the party's mainstream – and white – candidates would "sell out the national party to get their way locally."
19. Ibid. Gov. Russell, in what he surely took to be a private missive, had written that "the Negroes of the South are largely savages, and are no more fit to govern than are their brethren in African swamps or so many Mongolians dumped down from

pagan Asia."

20. Reeves, 243.

21. Zipf, 510, 514. The Wilmington Daily Journal especially targeted black ministers for their political activism, saying in an editorial that they "...carried the Radical platform concealed among the leaves of the Holy Bible." When black delegate Abraham Galloway demanded blacks get equal seating privileges at public lectures, newspapers decried the proposal, claiming it allowed blacks to "...visit places of amusement, frequented by your wives, your mothers, your daughters, and your sisters," permitting them to "occupy seats side by side with those most dear to you in theatres – aye, even in temples of Almighty God!"

22. Reeves, 244. Among the clubs were the Young Men's Republican Club and The Republican Afro League, who promised to fight what they saw as Raleigh's attempts to reduce their civil rights to "mere quasi citizenship." Many other clubs formed, each faction responsible for a further splintering of the once unified Republican vote.

FOR MORE, CHECK OUT THESE SOURCES!

Books

• Evans, William McKee. *Ballots and Fence Rails: Reconstruction on the lower Cape Fear*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967.

• Reeves, Bill. Strength Through Struggle: The Chronological and Historical Record of the African-American Community in Wilmington, North Carolina, 1865-1950. Wilmington, N.C.: New Hanover County Public Library, 1998.

• 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission. "1898 Wilmington Race Riot – Final Report." Raleigh: N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, 2006. Http://history.ncdcr.gov/1898-wrrc/report/report.htm. (accessed 3/2/2013).



The Bellamy Mansion did double duty as Gen. Hawley's headquarters and as the Freedman's Bureau for ex-slaves of the Cape Fear.

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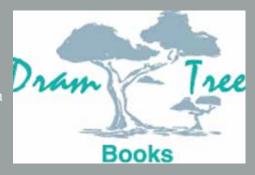
- Carolina men with Admiral Vernon at Cartagena
- The sinking of the John D. Gill by a German U-Boat off Southport, N.C.
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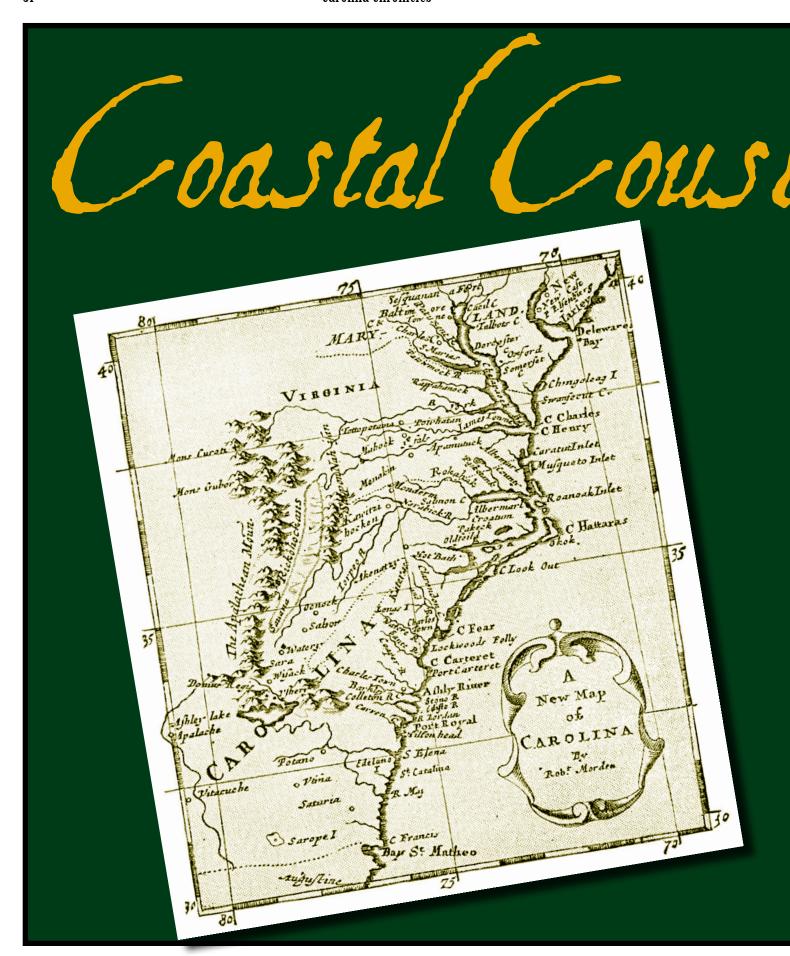


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· Carolina Chronicles — 32



From the very beginning, Wilmington, N.C. and Charleston, S.C. have been connected. From their Proprietary Era origins, to the violence of the Civil War and more, few places are as inextricably linked.



scant three years separated the end of the first English settlement on North Carolina's Cape Fear River from the beginning of a similar effort on the Ashley River in South Carolina. For the next two and a half centuries, the communities that sprang from those humble beginnings continued to mirror each other in a host of ways, with ties that have made the history of the two places inextricably linked.

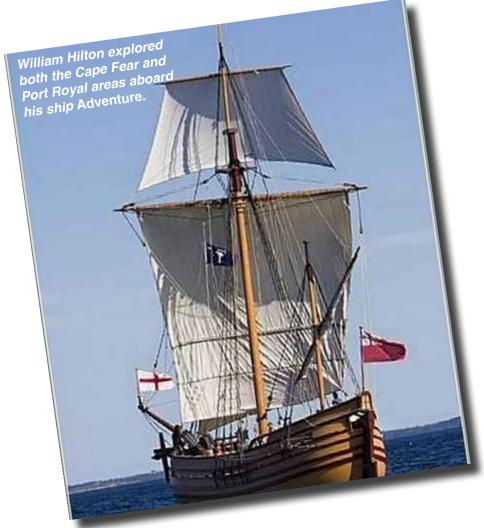
In 1627, eighty English settlers crossed the Atlantic Ocean to colonize the westernmost island of the Lesser Antilles, a place they called Barbados. Thirteen years later sugar arrived with Portuguese Jews from Brazil,² and all other cash crops³ on the island fell by the wayside. Within just a few short years, Barbadian small holders saw their lands being bought up by wealthier planters, and every square inch of arable land on the small island was put under cultivation. Sugar was king,⁴ and turned a struggling colony in a vast ocean into England's wealthiest New World jewel. But for those displaced small farmers, and the sons of the great planters themselves, the close confines of Barbados soon proved to be a place of few prospects.⁵

On the North American mainland, English attempts at settlement below Virginia had seen mixed results. Settlers from the Chesapeake had begun mi-

grating south, into the Albemarle region of what would eventually become North Carolina,⁶ but immigration was muted by fears of Spanish interdiction from Florida and a leadership crisis in England. While Oliver Cromwell's Interregnum put a hold on serious attempts to colonize Carolina, circumstances on Barbados and the restoration of the English monarchy in the person of King Charles II made it a priority by 1662.

That same year, mariner William Hilton was contracted to explore the Carolina coast for suitable places where English colonists might plant the King's standard.⁷ The original interest in Carolina came from Puritan New England, where some settlers were beginning to chafe at the restrictions placed on them by the dominant church hierarchy. Hilton sailed from Massachusetts to explore the waters of the Cape Fear River aboard his sloop, the Adventure. He returned with a glowing account of a land well suited to provide for the needs of Englishmen looking to make new lives for themselves. Months later, Hilton shepherded a shipload of the New Englanders to the river to establish a colony, but the settlement never took root. The Puritans remained on the Cape Fear only long

BY JACK E. FRYAR, JR.



enough to refill their water casks and release their livestock to forage in the woods lining the river, before leaving Carolina to return to New England or Barbados.⁸

A year later, Hilton returned carrying Barbadians led by John Vassall.9 The Barbadian effort was sponsored by a group of influential and enterprising planters that formed the Corporation of Barbadian Adventurers. The Vassall group had hired Hilton to reprise his investigation of Cape Fear a vear after the Massachusetts venture failed, this time in more detail. Hilton explored tributaries on both sides of the river, to include the numerous creeks. Before returning to Speightstown to report, he bought a large swath of the lands bounding

the river from local Indians.¹⁰

Based on the glowing report filed by Hilton, Vassall and company loaded their ships and sailed for Carolina. Unfortunately for them, they lacked permission from the Lords Proprietors for the venture. John Vassall had assumed securing a patent from the proprietors would be a mere formality, but a competing group of settlers under Sir John Yeamans and Thomas Modyford made the more convincing argument before the Lords. Whereas the petition presented by Vassall's cousin Henry sought concessions that were contrary to the newly completed Carolina Charter, the Yeamans group readily accepted the Lords Proprietors' terms.¹¹ Among them was a preference for

establishing a colony further south, nearer Cape Romain, at Port Royal ¹²

When Hilton dropped off the Vassall colony at Cape Fear, 13 he sailed south to explore the waters of what would come to be known as the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. His good opinion of the lands contributed to the Lords' favoring the more southern option. Meanwhile John Yeamans was made governor of the Carolina enterprise, and Vassall had to settle for becoming Deputy Governor. Yeamans' one and only trip to the Vassall enclave at the mouth of the Cape Fear's Town Creek came in 1665, when a wrecked flyboat carrying supplies for the settlement left the governor stranded until arrangements could be made to get him to the preferred settlement at Port Royal. Shortly after arriving there. Yeamans claimed illness and returned to Barbados, never to set foot in the colony again.

The Vassall effort ran afoul of neglect by the Lords Proprietors and Governor Yeamans, Indian troubles, and a Proprietor-imposed quit rent system that would have charged settlers for fallow lands



Gov. Sir John Yeamans

Carolina Chronicles —

unsuitable to cultivation along the Cape Fear. 14 By 1667, Vassall lamented that if he could have gotten just twenty men to stay with him, he would have continued to try and make a go of the Cape Fear settlement that had been dubbed Charles Town.¹⁵ Instead, the remaining settlers on the Cape Fear who had not already done so left for either Virginia, Barbados, or joined the Yeamans colony. By 1680, that colony took the name Charles Town, replacing the defunct settlement of the same name on the Cape Fear. The new Charles Town evolved to become one of the premiere cities of the South. So while the famous Charles Town (Charleston, these days) is in South Carolina, the first Charles Town was on the Cape Fear River. The similarities and connections between the two places are many.

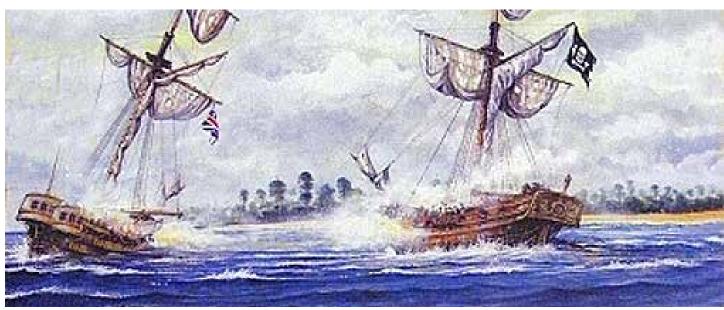
During the Golden Age of Piracy,¹⁶ the Carolina coastline was a magnet for high seas rogues who plundered merchant shipping and, on occasion, coastal towns themselves. The nearly six hun-

dred miles of combined North and South Carolina coastlines seemed tailor made for sea robbers, full of coves, bays, rivers, and inlets ideal for hiding a pirate ship. Combined with the sparse population of the Carolinas, and the weakness of the government (especially in North Carolina, where Gov. Charles Eden was widely suspected of being in league with the pirates), the Carolinas became a favorite haunt of buccaneers likes Edward Teach, a.k.a. Blackbeard, and Stede Bonnet. In May 1718, Teach blockaded the harbor of Charles Town, holding local dignitaries hostage until a collection of medicines was gathered ashore to secure their release.¹⁷ On the Cape Fear, Bonnet used Fiddler's Creek to careen his ship, *Royal James*, for repairs that same year. While the Cape Fear had no organized settlement at the time, it was not totally free of prying eyes. Someone saw the pirate ship and got word to South Carolina Governor Robert Johnson in Charles Town. The governor dispatched William Rhett with two

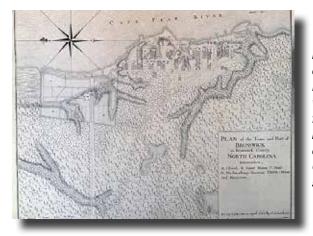


Col. William Rhett (above) captured Stede Bonnet, and Judge Nicholas Trott (below) hanged him.





The pirate Stede Bonnet was captured on the Cape Fear River at the Battle of the Sandbars before being hanged in Charleston.



The first permanent settlement on the Cape Fear at Brunswick (left) was founded in 1725 by the Moores of Charleston's Goose Creek settlement.



sloops-of-war to corral Bonnet. After a running gun battle down the Cape Fear, Bonnet was taken off Bald Head Island. He and his crew were transported to Charles Town and hung by Judge Nicholas Trott. Bonnet's death in December 1718, a month after the demise of Blackbeard at Ocracoke Inlet, signaled the end of major piracy along the Carolina coast.

Forty-four years after the last colonist left the Charles Town settlement on the Cape Fear River, the Tuscarora Indian War,18 around New Bern, North Carolina, saw South Carolina militia dispatched to help quell the violence that threatened to wipe out Baron Christopher DeGraffenreid's colony at the mouth of the Neuse and Trent Rivers. South Carolina Governor James Moore sent sons Nathaniel, Roger, and Maurice to lead the expedition. When the conflict ended, the Moore brothers took notice of the potential of lands around the Cape Fear. The land was attractive to them because at home. around Charles Town and nearby Goose Creek, all of the good coastal lands had already been claimed by previous generations. But on the Cape Fear, there was easy access to the Atlantic Ocean, plentiful natural resources, and lots of land to be

had. The Moore brothers returned to Goose Creek and pitched the idea of moving to the Cape Fear to their young cousins and friends. Ten years later, in 1725, Brunswick was chartered as the official port of entry for the North Carolina colony on the Cape Fear River.¹⁹

During the colonial period, ties between the towns on the Cape Fear (Brunswick and Wilmington), and Charles Town,²⁰ were especially strong. The shallow Cape Fear River²¹ allowed no vessels bigger than small brigs to call on the ports there, so cargos of naval stores,²² indigo, 23 and – later – rice, 24 had to be shipped first to either Charles Town, Norfolk, or Boston to be loaded on the deep draft ships that would take it to England and other places. The Carolina Low Country, stretching from Georgetown to a northern terminus marked by the Cape Fear River, became famous for the quality and quantity of its rice production. Plantations lining the Cape Fear marked the northernmost boundary of rice cultivation in the United States until after the Civil War.25

Rice is a very labor-intensive crop to grow, and longleaf pine trees do not harvest themselves.²⁶ As a result, another shared aspect of Charles Town and the

Cape Fear was the importance of African slaves. Even during earliest attempts at settlement in both the Cape Fear region and at Port Royal, slaves were a crucial component of the enterprise.²⁷ The influence of black Caribbean and African cultures on the Carolinas can be seen in their blending with white culture to give birth to the Gullah peoples of the Low Country. The pidgin language that resulted eventually evolved to become native to the region from the Cape Fear to Georgetown.²⁸

On the Cape Fear, slaves were considered an integral part of economic success for would-be planters. When the Moores moved part and parcel to North Carolina, they brought a number of their family slaves with them. Charles Town became the chief source of slaves who ended up working the rice fields and forests of the Cape Fear, and assumed that role early on.²⁹ The blacks' knowledge of rice made them well suited to labors on the Cape Fear.

The Revolutionary War highlighted links between the port towns of the Cape Fear and Charles Town on both the micro and macro levels. Tactically, both places were population centers that had both loyalists and Whig rebels among their populations.³⁰ Controlling the Cape Fear and Charles Town would rob the rebellion of valuable resources, and provide the British with a solid base of loyalist support for operations in the interior. Strategically, possessing Charles Town and Wilmington offered secure logistical bases to supply bread and bullets to redcoats in the field.

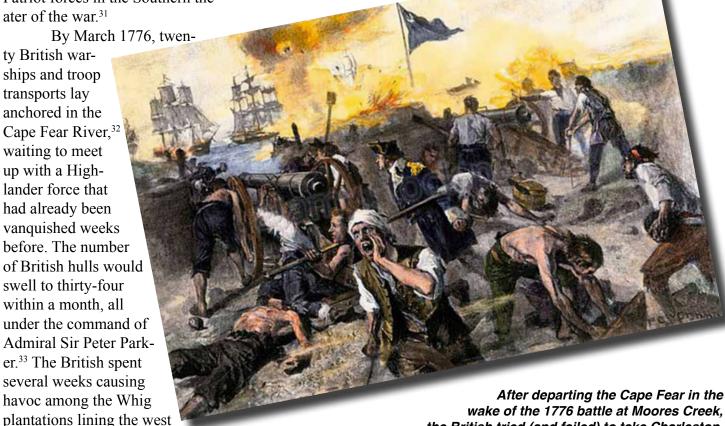
In 1776, North Carolina Royal Governor Josiah Martin conceived a plan to raise loyalist Highlanders in the colony, march them to the coast at Brunswick, and link them with British regulars to sweep through the North Carolina interior, reclaiming the rebellious colony for the crown. The plan went awry at Moores Creek Bridge in modern Pender County, when militia under Alexander Lillington and Richard Caswell defeated the Highland force in a fierce but brief battle that was the first victory for Patriot forces in the Southern theside of the river between Wilmington and Old Inlet,³⁴ and sacked the sleepy old port town at Brunswick. Finally it became apparent the loyalists were not coming, so Parker and General Sir Henry Clinton set their sites on Charles Town.³⁵

As British warships tested the mouth of Charleston Harbor in June 1776, palmetto-shrouded Patriot gun batteries under the direction of Col. William Moultrie barked a challenge from the sand walls of the Patriot fort.36 The ferocious battle ended in defeat for the British, who were unsuccessful in their attempts to reduce Moultrie's defenses on Sullivan's Island. Those attempts included landing British troops on nearby Long Island, but those soldiers were unable to wade across a deep channel separating the them from Moultrie's men. The British took severe damage to several of their

ships, including the *Actaeon*, which they had to fire to keep it out of rebel hands.

Four years later, British ships returned to Charleston. This time Continental forces under Gen. Benjamin Lincoln were surrounded and placed under siege until forced to surrender on May 12, 1780. With Charleston and Savannah in their hands, British commanders once again sought to tap into what they believed were many loyalists in the Carolina countryside just waiting for a redcoat army to provide them a king's standard to rally to. Gen Charles Lord Cornwallis devised his Southern Strategy to wrest the Carolinas back for the king, and eventually squash Washington's army between two British ones hitting him from the north and the south. To do that, he dispatched

the British tried (and failed) to take Charleston.





Major James Henry Craig with the 82nd Regiment of Foot to Wilmington to provide a logistics base for his army that would be leaving from Charleston and cutting a swath through the Carolina backcountry. The strategy ultimately failed when Nathaniel Greene met the British at Guilford Courthouse. which led to Cornwallis getting trapped on the Yorktown Peninsula. Craig eventually evacuated Wilmington and returned to Charleston when American forces under Griffith Rutherford closed around the town to push the British out. Soon the fighting part of the war ended everywhere. America was a free nation.

History generally credits P.G.T. Beauregard's shots at Major Robert Anderson's undermanned garrison at Fort Sumter with starting the Civil War, but weeks earlier, men in the Cape Fear got a jump on even the most ardent secessionists in Charleston.³⁷ As the movement to leave the Union gained momentum, Cape Fear men feared Forts Johnston and Caswell

at the mouth of the river could be occupied by Federal troops, effectively closing the river to outside traffic and choking off a vital lifeline for the nascent Confederacy. To prevent that, Major John D. Hedrick and the Cape Fear Minute Men took steps to secure the installations. On January 9, 1861, Ordnance Sergeant James Reilly³⁸ was forced to turn over the keys to Fort Johnston in Smithville³⁹ to an



Col. John J. Hedrick

Even before the bombardment of Ft. Sumter in Charleston Harbor, Cape Fear secessionists led by John J. Hedrick seized two federal forts on the Cape Fear.

armed band of men under Hedrick's command. The same thing happened at Fort Caswell on Oak Island shortly afterwards. 40 But as the war had not officially started (hence North Carolina was still officially a part of the Union), Gov. John Ellis made Hedrick return the forts to Federal control. After the guns

of Charleston's Battery opened the war by firing on Fort Sumter the following April, President Abraham Lincoln called for North Carolina to contribute 75,000 men to put down the rebellion. At that point, North Carolina joined her sister states in secession, and Hedrick was given the go ahead to reclaim Forts Johnston and Caswell.

Those forts would prove vital to the South's war efforts, as would Sumter and the installations protecting Charleston's harbor. When hostilities seemed imminent, Union war planners recognized that the South did not have the industrial base to support a long-term conflict. The things the Confederacy would need to sustain the fight – bullets, cloth, medicines, foodstuffs, manufactured goods, and more - would have to come from outside the South. To stop that flow of supplies, Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, the old warhorse who had been in a U.S. Army uniform since the War of 1812, conceived of a plan to blockade Southern ports. His "Anaconda Plan" would starve the Southerners' ability to prosecute the war by literally starving them of the raw

materials to field an army or even feed their people.⁴¹

Southerners could read a map, too. They realized that access to the oceans, and the fast ships willing to brave the Union blockade to bring in the supplies the South would desperately need, was of paramount importance.⁴² To that end, Confederate planners began building a series of eleven forts and batteries from the mouth of the Cape Fear River all the way to the port at Wilmington. The anchor of this massive system of riverine fortifications was Fort Fisher, the largest fort in the South and one that compared favorably with Russia's Sevastopol.⁴³ Its forty-seven big guns, including five rifled Whitworth breech-loading cannon, provided a protective umbrella that made Wilmington a favorite destination for blockade-runners.

Charleston attempted similar measures to shore up its harbor defenses, but geography conspired to thwart Confederate efforts. Access to Charleston's harbor is by way of a wide bay where the Ashley and Cooper Rivers empty out into the Atlantic. But that width, and the concentration of Federal warships to close off the seat of the rebellion, made the days of access for blockade-runners to Charleston numbered.44 As the port at Charleston was closed, the blockade running firms closed their offices in the city and shifted operations to Wilmington, where blockade-runners could still reach Confederate docks.45

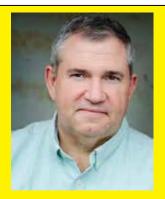
Wilmington, on the other hand, was geographically blessed. If Confederate planners had been given the chance to design a port for blockade running, they could

hardly have improved on what nature already provided. The Cape Fear River was accessible by two inlets. The first, between Bald Head Island and Oak Island, was Old Inlet, the traditional entrance to the river dating back to the first explorations of the region. The second, at the southern tip of Confederate Point (the pre-war Federal Point), was New Inlet.46 Between the two, running for twenty-eight miles into the Atlantic Ocean from the southeastern tip of Bald Head Island. was Frying Pan Shoals, which had been wrecking ships for centuries.⁴⁷ Both inlets were heavily fortified by Confederate guns at Forts Campbell, Caswell, Holmes, Fisher, and by a gun battery on Zeke's Island. The practical result of this geographical gift was that to close off the port at Wilmington, the U.S. Navy would require essentially two fleets: one for New Inlet, one for Old Inlet.⁴⁸ Eventually Wilmington became the last open port of the Confederacy, through which literally everything the South needed to fight an increasingly desperate war flowed.⁴⁹ It stayed open until Fort Fisher fell in January 1865.

Connections between Charleston and the Cape Fear exist in the humanitarian realm as well. In 1862, an epidemic of yellow fever made Wilmington into a ghost town. Soldiers from Confederate forts nearby were forbidden to venture into the city. People died in such great numbers that an acres-wide mass grave in the city's Oakdale Cemetery was used to inter their remains. Whole families perished, and did so at such a frighteningly fast rate that no one was left to record their passing.⁵⁰ Only three physicians remained in

Wilmington to tend to the sick and dying, and two of them perished from the disease, too. Wilmington Mayor John Dawson sent out a desperate plea for help, and Charleston answered.

Confederate headquarters in Charleston responded by dispatching a physician and some nurses to Wilmington.⁵¹ As well, Charleston's Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy sent a contingent of nuns to succor the sick and dying in Wilmington.⁵²



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The similarities between the evolution of the Cape Fear and Charleston are striking. Both regions developed out of the adventurous spirit of Barbadians during the colonial period when the Carolina coast was literally the frontier in the most literal sense. The same people who attempted settlement on the Cape Fear later contributed to the settlement of Port Royal. Fifty years later, their descendants returned to build the first permanent settlement on the Cape Fear River at Brunswick.

Economically, the people of the Cape Fear depended on the deepwater port at Charleston to provide a means of getting their trade goods to a wider, global market. At the same time, those same ships brought in the fine things that adorned the great houses of the Cape Fear and their owners. Slaves from Charleston sweat in both Low Country and Cape Fear fields. The two places were linked socially, economically, and to a large degree politically for most of the years prior to Reconstruction.

It has been a long time since American land was the stage on which wars were fought, 53 but when it was, Charleston and the Cape Fear shared a proximity that made them likely to feel the brunt of war's hammer equally. Through Indian wars, revolution, and secession, Charleston and the Cape Fear have battled together, fighting both common enemies and terrible diseases. These shared commonalities, of culture and hardship, triumphs and

defeats, have in many cases mirrored each other over the course of centuries. The end result is that the Cape Fear and Charleston are truly cousins, in that shared pedigrees and lineage have created irrevocable links between the two places.

- Notes -

- ¹ Though it should be noted that at the time, neither North nor South Carolina existed as separate entities. In the seventeenth century, the lands below Virginia and above Spanish Florida were simply known as Carolina (or Carolana, depending on which map you were reading). 2. L.H. Roper. Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662-1729. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Hereafter cited as Roper. The introduction of sugar planting and processing techniques is generally accepted to have come with Jewish émigrés from Portuguese colonies in Brazil, where anti-Semitism forced them to seek homes elsewhere. Other accounts say that Danes brought sugar to the island. While the exact origins of sugar's arrival in Barbados is obscure now, the fact remains that it transformed Barbadian society.
- 3. J.H. Parry. A Short History of the West Indies. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987. Hereafter cited as Parry. Barbadian settlers had attempted to grow tobacco, but the island strain was woefully inferior to that being cultivated in Virginia.
- 4. Roper. Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662-1729.

 New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

 Sugar was so profitable that it was actually cheaper to import foodstuffs than to use any of Barbados' precious land for growing anything other than sugar cane.
- 5. Parry. As small landholders sold out to wealthier sugar planters, they worked the cane growing on lands they used to own. But the industry grew at such a prodigious rate that African slaves were soon being imported in large numbers, displacing the working class English field hands. As well, second sons with no chance at inheritance also found themselves contemplating a dim future on Barbados.
- 6. Roper. *Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662-1729.*New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. The

- Virginia Assembly granted Roger Green land on the Chowan River in 1653. A few years later, in 1662, another Virginian, George Durant, bought Albemarle land from local Indians.
- 7. William S. Powell. The Proprietors of Carolina. Raleigh, N.C.: The Carolina Tercentenary Commission, 1963. Charles Stuart, son of the beheaded King James I, returned from Irish exile to reclaim the throne with the aid of loyal followers like George Monck and Anthony Ashley Cooper. They and six others would play a pivotal role in the development of Carolina when King Charles II made them the Lords Proprietors of the region, with wide ranging authority to determine the means and locations of settlement in the colony. 8. J. Leitch Wright Jr. "William Hilton's Voyage to Carolina in 1662." Essex Institute Historical Collections, April 1969, pp. 96-103.
- 9. Daniel Webster Fagg, Jr. "Carolina, 1663-1683: The Founding of a Proprietary." (PhD. Dissertation, Emory University, 1970). Fagg speculates that by the time the New Englanders reached the Cape Fear, word arrived that the Lords Proprietors had finally established the terms of settlement in Carolina, which contained religious constraints that did not suit them. Rather than waste their efforts under unfavorable terms, they opted to return home or try their luck elsewhere. But the New Englanders left one little sign of their presence other than their cattle -asign posted at the mouth of the Cape Fear, warning any future explorers that the place was an inhospitable prospect for colonization.
- 10. Alfred M. Waddell. "Early Explorers of the Cape Fear." Delivered before the North Carolina Society of Colonial Dames at Brunswick Town site. William R. Reaves Collection, New Hanover County Public Library. Vassall, a former New Englander, had emigrated to Barbados from Scituate, after finding dim prospects in the colder climes of the Massachusetts Bay area. He came from distinguished stock, being the grandson of Samuel Vassall, an English shipbuilder who contributed vessels to both the fleet that met the Spanish Armada, and conveyed the first Puritans to Massachusetts.
- 11. James Sprunt. *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River: 1660-1916.* Wilmington, N.C.: Dram Tree Books, 2005 Hereafter cited

as Sprunt. Local tradition has it that the Indian chief, Watcoosa, sweetened the deal by throwing in two of his daughters for Hilton. The English mariner, who already had a wife waiting for him in Massachusetts, managed to debark for Barbados without his native "wives" in tow. 12. Roper.

13. Ibid. There were several reasons for this, among them a desire by the Lords Proprietors to provide a buffer between the highly profitable Virginia and Spanish outposts at St. Augustine. They also, in the wake of Spain's weakened global position after the loss of the Armada, wanted to test the Dons' commitment to enforcing claims to lands below the Chesapeake.

14. Sprunt. This paper consistently uses the modern name for the North Carolina River, Cape Fear, to avoid confusion. The river, the only one in the state with direct access to the Atlantic Ocean, has gone by several names over the centuries, including Rio Jordan and, during the seventeenth century, the Charles River (a tribute to the monarch with whom the colonists were always currying favor).

15. E. Lawrence Lee. *The Lower Cape Fear in Colonial Days*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1965. To be fair, the Lords Proprietors were also serving the English government in other capacities. The Great Plague of London (1665), the Great Fire of London (1665), and the Second Anglo-Dutch War took precedence over the fate of 800 settlers an ocean away.

16. Documenting the American South: Colonial and State Records of North Carolina. Letter from John Vassall to John Colleton, 1667. Vol. 1, pages 159-160. http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr01-0061. Vassal was unaware that the addressee, Lords Proprietor John Colleton, had already died.

17. Generally accepted as being from 1680-1720.

18. Angus Konstam. *Blackbeard: America's Most Notorious Pirate*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.

19. 1711-1715.

20. Sprunt; William S. Powell. North Carolina Through Four Centuries. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univeristy of North Carolina Press, 1989.

22. Charles Town would not become known as Charleston until 1783, after the American colonies had all but won their

independence from Great Britain. 23. Claude V. Jackson III; Jack E. Fryar Jr. (ed.). The Big Book of the Cape Fear River. Wilmington: Dram Tree Books, 2008. Hereafter cited as Jackson. Average depth of the Cape Fear River has historically been 9-12 feet outside of the main shipping channel (in modern times, dredged to 38 feet). Making matters worse, a sandy riverbed that constantly shifts in hurricanes and heavy storms makes navigation of the river a treacherous undertaking 24. Naval stores is the collective name for tar, pitch, and turpentine from the plentiful longleaf pine tree of the Carolina coastal plains. They were vital to marine construction, and North Carolina was the biggest producer of them in the British empire. 25. Louise Pettus and Ron Chepesiuk. The Palmetto State: Stories from the Making of South Carolina. Orangeburg, S.C.: Sandlapper Publishing, 1991. Hereafter cited as Pettus. Eliza Pinckney introduced indigo on her family's plantation on Wappoo Creek, seventeen miles from Charles Town, in the early 1700s. It became a staple of South Carolina's colonial economy. Efforts to replicate her success on the Cape Fear were more moderate. 26. Several prominent histories of South Carolina credit Dr. Henry Woodward of Charleston with planting the first successful acres of rice in the Low Country around Charles Town in the 1680s. The seeds came from a merchantman out of Madagascar that had to call on the port at Charles Town for repairs. 27. Sprunt. It has been said that the bound-

ary represented by the Cape Fear River was so distinct that one could tell the difference between rice grown on the west side of the river from that grown on the New Hanover County side by taste alone. 28. Bradford J. Wood. This Remote Part of the World: Regional Formation in Lower Cape Fear, North Carolina 1725-1775. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004. Hereafter cited as Wood. While rice was an important part of the Cape Fear's colonial economy, it paled in comparison to naval stores. From 1768-1772, rice only accounted for a little over 1% of total exports from the Cape Fear, while naval stores accounted for roughly 82%. That percentage would increase in later years, after independence.

29. Roper; James B. Legg and W. Bryan Watson Jr. "The Exploration, Settlement,

and Abandonment of the Lower Cape Fear, 1662-67: The Historical Record and the Archaeological Evidence at the Supposed Site of Charles Towne." Unpublished manuscript, May 1979. Author's collection; Richard Waterhouse. "England, the Caribbean, and the Settlement of Carolina." *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 1975), pp. 259-281. For instance, some estimates claim that as much as two thirds of the reported 800 people living within the 32 square miles around the Cape Fear's Charles Town settlement were black slaves.

30. J.A. Opala. *The Gullah: Rice, Slavery, and the Sierra Leone-American Connection.* Freetown: United States Information Service, 1987.

31. Wood. As early as 1734, Cape Fear's John Dalrymple bought 110 slaves from brokers in Charles Town.

32. Robert M. Dunkerly. *Redcoats on the River: Southeastern North Carolina in the Revolutionary War.* Wilmington, N.C.: Dram Tree Books, 2008. Hereafter cited as Dunkerly. For instance, Wilmington merchants depended on the British mercantile system for their livelihoods, so they generally tended to support King George III and Parliament. Yet nine of the eleven regiments of the N.C. Continental Line raised during the war were formed at Wilmington.

33. Ibid. The battle took place on February 27, 1776. Depending on whose account you read, the battle lasted from five to ten minutes. It was a route of the Highlanders, and ended loyalist aspirations in North Carolina for four more years, until Charles Town fell to the British in 1780.

34. Dunkerly. Aboard one of those ships was Ethan Allen, the famous leader of the Green Mountain Boys and backwoods patriot from Vermont. Allen was a prisoner awaiting repatriation after being captured in the ill-fated 1775 expedition to take Montreal. He would witness British actions both at Cape Fear and Charles Town. 35. David Lee Russell. Victory on Sullivan's Island: The British Cape Fear/ Charles Town Expedition of 1776. Haverford, PA: Infinity Publishing Co., 2002. Hereafter cited as Russell. General Sir Henry Clinton was aboard too, as commander of the ground element of the force. But until such time as the army troops were landed and sufficiently able to conduct independent operations on their

own, Parker remained in overall command while the troops were aboard his ships. 36. Ibid. Redcoat raiders burned the plantation of Robert Howe, a Continental officer of the Cape Fear who would become the highest-ranking Southern officer in Washington' army. They also destroyed the mill at Orton plantation, and Russelborough, the former residence of two of North Carolina's five royal governors, a quarter mile north of Brunswick. By 1776, the house was owned by ardent rebel William Dry.

37. Dunkerly; Russell. The expedition's orders instructed them to move on to Charles Town if operations on the Cape Fear River should prove impractical or fruitless.

38. Russell. The battle occurred on June 28, 1776. Elements of Parker's fleet had been arriving off Charles Town since May, but Parker waited to attack the city until joined by redcoat regulars brought from Ireland under the command of Gen. Charles Lord Cornwallis.

39. James L. Walker, Jr. *Rebel Gibraltar: Fort Fisher and Wilmington, C.S.A.*Wilmington, N.C.: Dram Tree Books, 2005. Hereafter cited as Walker. While much of North Carolina was generally Unionist in their attitudes, in southeastern North Carolina, secessionists dominated the discourse. As early as January 3, 1861, a red secessionist flag was hoisted up a flagpole at Front and Market Streets in Wilmington, accompanied by a host of fiery speeches.

40. Sergeant James Walker was a unique individual. When the war finally broke out, he resigned from the U.S. Army and enlisted in the Confederate army, where as an artillerist, he participated in seven of the biggest battles of the conflict and rose to the rank of Major. Reilly was also left as the highest-ranking officer at Fort Fisher in January 1865, after Gen. W.H.C. Whiting and Col. William Lamb were wounded in the final battle for the fort. Major James Reilly, the same man who four years earlier had surrendered Fort Johnston to secessionist troops, was left to surrender Fort Fisher to Gen. Alfred Terry. That makes James Reilly the only man who surrendered both a Federal and Confederate fort to the enemy during the Civil War.

- 41. Modern Southport, N.C.
- 42. Walker. It was customary at the time

to leave only caretakers to look out for an installation and keep it ready for occupation by troops should the need arise. 43. Walker. Scott's plan was derided in the press, who at the time dismissed any notion that the war would last long enough for the blockade strategy to be effective. The label "Anaconda Plan" was one bestowed on it by the media. In the end, Scott proved right, and his detractors proved remarkably shortsighted. 44. Walker; Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr. *The* Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope. Campbell, CA: Savas Publishing Co., 1997. Hereafter cited as Fonvielle. Blockade running would make fortunes for many of the daring captains and crews who risked sinking or capture by the U.S. Navy. Cotton that sold for cents on the pound in the South, sold for dollars on the pound in England, whose industrial age textile mills were starving for all they could get of the fiber. It was said that a captain only had to make one successful run from a port like Wilmington or Charleston, to the transshipment points in British Bermuda and the Bahamas, to pay for his investment. Everything after that was pure profit.

45. Sevastopol was the virtually impregnable Russian fort in the Ukraine of Crimean War fame.

46. Fonvielle. Charleston's harbor was successfully closed by elements of John Dahlgren's South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in 1863. Dahlgren is the same man who invented the Dahlgren Gun, a cannon widely used aboard U.S. Navy warships.

47. Fonvielle. Fraser, Trenholm & Co., Crenshaw & Collie & Co., and even the State of North Carolina itself operated blockade-running offices in Wilmington. Fraser, Trenholm & Co. and Crenshaw & Collie & Co. both opened offices in the North Carolina town in addition to their main offices in Charleston. When Charleston was closed in 1863, they shifted their operations to the Cape Fear.

48. Jackson. New Inlet was created by a savage hurricane that hammered the North Carolina coast in 1761.

49. See the earlier reference to Gov. Sir John Yeamans' flyboat.

50. Walker; Fonvielle. It was not until late in the war that the Federals finally managed to get enough hulls into the blockade off the Cape Fear to close both entrances

with any degree of success. Until then, the Confederates used secure interior lines of communication to signal outgoing blockade-runners which of the two exit points were the least well guarded. If a blockading Federal ship guessed wrong, there was no way they could make it around Frying Pan Shoals in time to capture the fleeing blockade-runner.

51. Fonvielle. Robert E. Lee readily admitted that if Wilmington fell, he would not be able to keep his Army of Northern Virginia in the field. Rail lines traveling north from Wilmington to Richmond, and south to Charleston, carried offloaded supplies from blockade-runners to chronically undersupplied rebel armies.

52. Fonvielle. More than a third of the city would die off during the epidemic, somewhere in the neighborhood of seven hundred people (no one knows for sure the correct number). That death toll does not include passings among the slave population, who were not included on official tallies. Slaves were not interred in Oakdale Cemetery.

53. One of the reasons so few physicians were in Wilmington when the epidemic broke out is that qualified doctors found themselves drafted into the ranks of the Confederate army, and were tending to battlefield wounds far from the port city. 54. Beverly Tetterton. *Wilmington: Lost But Not Forgotten*. Wilmington, N.C.: Dram Tree Books, 2005. After the epidemic ended, the nuns returned to Charleston. In 1869, Bishop (later Cardinal) James Gibbons requested that they send a permanent contingent back to Wilmington. They have been in the city ever since. 55. By this, I mean sustained war on

55. By this, I mean sustained war on American soil. Acts of terrorism such as 911 do not count in this reference.



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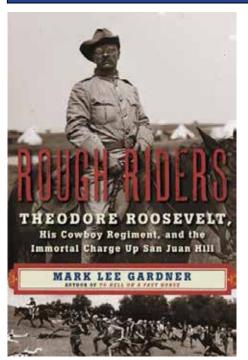
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Theodore Roosevelt: His Cowboy Regiment, and the Immortal Charge Up San Juan Hill by Mark Lee Gardner (William Morrow • 978-0062312082 • Hardcover • May 2016)

He may not have had the gravitas of a George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, but there is a reason the pugnacious Theodore Roosevelt is a consistent frontrunner when Americans are asked to choose their favorite presidents. It's easy to see why. Quite literally a self-made man in the physical sense, the Oyster Bay blueblood would tackle every challenge he faced to achieve victory often through sheer force of will. The cult of personality that sprung up around Teddy Roosevelt, which persists to this day, in many ways had its beginning in the famous charge of the New York Volunteers he led up San Juan Ridge in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Mark Lee Gardner has delivered an absorbing account of Roosevelt and the "Cowboy Regiment" he went to war with that entertains and perpetuates the larger than life persona of the man who would eventually join our other great presidents

in the stony tribute that is Mount Rushmore.

After a sickly childhood in wh

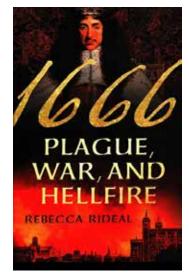
After a sickly childhood in which young Theodore fought tooth and nail to overcome the physical frailty that threatened his effusive spirit, the future president plunged into a life of manly pursuits that tested him physically, mentally, and spiritually. By the time the war with Spain erupted after the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine, Roosevelt had more than earned his spurs as an outdoorsman and naturalist, cowboy, lawman, and politician. But for a man who always felt the need to prove himself, the cauldron of war was the ultimate crucible. There was no way the United States would fight a war in Cuba without the participation of Theodore Roosevelt.

Largely at the urging of Roosevelt and others in his camp. Congress authorized the raising of three regiments of cavalry that came to be known as "cowboy regiments." Roosevelt lassoed regular Army veteran Leonard Wood to command, while Teddy contented himself with the post of second in command. Roosevelt put out a call to a diverse collection of friends with whom he had crossed path in his colorful life - cowpunchers and Harvard fraternity boys, Indians and Indian fighters, lawmen and outlaws - all answered the bugle call to duty when Theodore put out the word for volunteers. The recruits all had one thing in common. To a man they all knew that if there was glory and adventure to be had in the American expedition to Cuba against Spain, Theodore Roosevelt would somehow find a way to be smack dab in the middle of it. They were right.

The story of Theodore and his Rough Riders, as the regiment came to be known, was a sensation that sold a mountain of newspapers back home, and Mark Lee Gardner proves that their reputation was well deserved (even if the regular army, and rightly so, chaffed at the spotlight placed on the volunteers at the expense of their own contributions

to victory). Despite appalling conditions where heat, disease, starvation, and often inept leadership caused more casualties than Spanish Mausers, Roosevelt's hodgepodge collection of khaki-clad volunteers performed in such a way that their place in history was assured. The Theodore Roosevelt who emerged from the fights at Las Guasimas and Kettle Hill was a larger than life figure ready to take his rightful place on the national stage.

This fun read is a welcome addition to the already voluminous body of work devoted to the life of one of America's greatest icons. Gardner relies heavily on diaries and letters from not just Roosevelt, but the men who fought along side him to flesh out the nuts and bolts of the story gleaned from official reports and newspaper accounts of the era. The Spanish-American War was a pivotal episode in Roosevelt's life, one which lay the groundwork for everything that would come after. Mark Lee Gardner has written a superb account of it, one which is historically accurate, balanced, and entertaining, too.



1666: Plague, War and Hellfire by Rebecca Rideal (Thomas Dunne Books • 978-1-250097064 • Hardcover • October 2016)

One might wonder why a publication centered around the history of North and

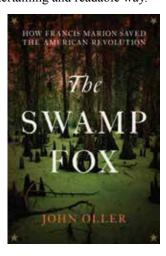
South Carolina might review a book about a single year in the England's seventeenth century. The answer would be that the events that transpired in London specifically and England in general would play a pivotal role in the development of the Carolinas. Over the span of just a single year, London would endure the Great Plague that killed off multitudes, a continuing war with the Dutch that posed a serious risk to the island nation and its aspirations on the world stage, and then a fire that ravaged most of the capital city.

After the restoration of Charles Stuart to the Whitehall throne left empty when the English Civil War opened a vacancy via regicide, London seemed to emerge from the shadows of Oliver Cromwell's long winter like children sniffing the first warm breath of spring. Gaiety was the new order of the day, and all of the sins that had been so frowned upon by the stern masters of the Interregnum were on full display (often to the consternation of the Puritans who missed the good old days of state enforced piety). But while the court of King Charles II sowed their restored oats whenever and wherever they could, trouble was lurking unseen on the docks where flea infested rats brought bubonic plague into the heart of the English capital. As the graveyards overflowed with the victims of the pestilence, war with the Dutch in a trade war turned shooting war threatened to bankrupt the nation and draw in England's traditional French enemy across the channel. As if that wasn't enough, no sooner had bills of mortality begun showing that perhaps the Black Death had run its course, a conflagration set London alight and destroyed homes and businesses by the te

Part of the reason the Vassall colony failed can be laid at the feet of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, but as Rebecca Rideal's fine work demonstrates, there were extenuating circumstances. All eight of the Lords Proprietors had duties in English government besides their positions as masters of the lands in Carolina. Demands on their time due to the Anglo-Dutch War, the plague, and the Great Fire of London forced George Monck, Anthony Ashley Cooper, and the others to put their Carolina venture on the back burner. Rideal does yeoman's work painting a picture of that fateful year, in

which many Englishmen must have felt God himself was working against them.

Rebecca Rideal is masterful in her knowledge of the London of the late seventeenth century. Her story is populated with a host of colorful characters like George Monck, Samuel Pepys, King Charles II and all of his paramours, and his brother, the stolid James, Duke of York. Every page is filled with tidbits that take the reader beyond the liveried footmen at Court, to deliver a remarkably vivid picture of what life was like for both commoners and the courtly during an epochal year in English history. To understand the multifaceted explanation of what happened to the Charles Towne settlers at Cape Fear, Rideal's work is a superb resource that documents the distractions that impacted the colonists' fate in an eminently entertaining and readable way.

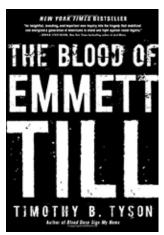


The Swamp Fox: How Francis Marion Saved the American Revolution by John Oller (Da Capo • 978-0-306-82457-9 • Hardcover • October 2016)

Outside of people who live in the Carolinas, or a few old timers who might recall Leslie Nielson's portrayal in the television series about him decades ago, not many people today are likely to know much about Francis Marion. That's a shame, because the bandy-legged planter of Huguenot extraction who earned the nickname The Swamp Fox for his exploits against the British in the Carolina Lowcountry was one of the most effective fighters for the Patriot cause in the war for American independence. John Oller has written a book that easily and entertainingly corrects that deficiency.

Marion was the least likely looking fellow to become a hero to those who wanted a break from Great Britain. Short, long nosed, and knobby-kneed, Marion possessed little of the swagger that marked other Revolutionary War heroes like Benedict Arnold, Charles Lee, or Marion's best known adversary, dragoon officer Banastre Tarleton of the British Legion. Yet Marion's cunning and competence are borne out by the string of victories he amassed in a guerilla campaign that was a thorn in the sides of the redcoats for the duration of their Southern Campaign.

Oller has created a revealing synthesis of the wartime general who so effectively stymied British plans in the Carolinas and the private man who avoided the limelight whenever he could, preferring to attend to his family and estate. The Swamp Fox sometimes chaffed at what he saw as obstructionist fellow offiers whose cooperation was often slow in coming if at all. Yet lacking reliable sources of supplies and reinforcements, Francis Marion's masterful campaigns in the Carolinas earned him his place as perhaps America's greatest guerilla fighter. Marion was not a great orator. He was not a political animal like other Carolina generals (Thomas Sumter comes to mind). But what he was, was the right man for the right job at the right moment in history. John Oller's new book makes that argument very convincingly.



The Blood of Emmett Till by Timothy B. Tyson (Simon & Schuster • 9781476714844 • Hardcover • February 2017)

The Carolinas are no strangers to racial violence. In 1898, Wilmington, N.C. was the site of what is widely said to be

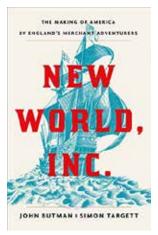
the only successful coup d'état in U.S. history, when white supremacists ousted the duly elected city leadership and went on a rampage that ended in African-American disenfranchisement, dispossession, and blood. In the 1950s W. Horace Carter won a Pulitzer Prize for his newspaper work exposing the crimes of the Ku Klux Klan in and around Tabor City, N.C. A look at a list of the known incidents of lynchings in the South shows both Carolinas well represented when it comes to occurrences of the reprehensible. Yet perhaps no single incident of racial hatred and violence carries the weight of what happened to fourteen-year-old Emmett Till during the hot summer of 1955 in a place called Money, Mississippi. Timothy B. Tyson's fresh new look at that seminal moment that sparked the activism of the Civil Rights Era is a welcome addition to the story of Black-White relations in America.

Emmett Till was bigger than his fourteen years when he traveled from Chicago to visit with relatives in Mississippi in August 1955. While there were lines a black man crossed at his peril in the supposedly more enlightened cities of the North, it was far worse in the South. Mississippi, especially, made breaches of the dividing line between blacks and whites a truly deadly offense. Either Emmett Till did not know, or did not fully understand, that things that were dangerous in Chicago could cost him his life in the deepest of the Deep South.

Till made the mistake of speaking out of turn by Mississippi standards to a white woman, Carolyn Bryant, at a general store in Money. When her husband and brother-in-law found out, the brash teen was in mortal danger. The two white men pulled Emmett out of his uncle's home late one night, took him to a river, beat him so badly they crushed his skull, tied a fan around his neck, and threw Till in. When the boy's body was found and returned to Chicago, his mother made the courageous decision to have an open casket at the viewing. Jet magazine photos of the bloated, deformed body of a child, guilty of nothing more than speaking out of turn in a world alien to him, lit a spark that grew into a national movement for racial justice and equality.

Tyson is an accomplished chronicler of civil rights atrocities. The author's celebrated account of something similar

that occurred in his boyhood North Carolina home, Blood Done Signed My Name, is a testament to his ability to tell a compelling story that is both historically accurate and as horrifying as anything Stephen King has ever penned, because it's real. In this new offering from the Duke University historian, Tyson has uncovered new primary sources that peel back the layers of the Emmett Till story afresh, including the first-ever interview with the woman who was at the center of what happened to Emmett. The resulting book is a new understanding of a hate crime that still resonates today. The Blood of Emmett Till cements Timothy B. Tyson's place among the best of the historians of the Civil Rights Era.



New World, Inc.: The Making of America by England's Merchant Adventurers by John Butman & Simon Targett (Little, Brown and Company • 9780316307888 • Hardcover • March 2018)

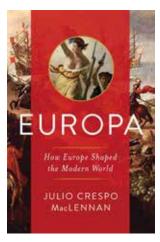
The settlement of North America by England is usually thought of in terms of Puritans seeking religious freedom, wealthy lords proprietors hoping to win wealth and expand national territory for their king, or as a result of the need for military outposts to counter the activities of Old World rivals in the New World. But seasoned author John Butman and Cam bridge-trained historian Dr. Simon Targett approach the age of exploration and settlement from the angle of merchant interests that sought tradable commodities in the newly found lands of the west. The result is an eminently readable and entertaining bit of history that demonstrates that the settlement of North America, stemming from explorations by England's "merchant adventurers" for mercantile reasons,

provided just as much or more motivation for crossing the Atlantic as the more lofty reasons most Americans cite from their high school history classes.

England was a bit player in the initial rush to plant a presence in the New World after Columbus introduced his discoveries to Europeans. Spain and Portugal were the first out of the gate to claim territory in what would become Central and South America, and would become fabulously wealthy as a result. But Elizabethan England was just a poor relation at best compared to the gilded might of Spain and most other courts of Europe, and her initial forays into the New World demonstrated the caution and limited resources the island nation had to invest in overseas adventures. The one faction of English society that did have the resources to fund expeditions to the mysterious continent across the sea was the wealthy merchant class and their upper class investors.

England's economy found itself in deep trouble when the market for English cloth collapsed in the sixteenth century, and if the nation were to survive it was forced to explore new avenues of income. Ever since the Crusades, the goods coming into Europe from the lands of the Muslims and across the Silk Roads had stimulated a demand that might serve to replace the now defunct market for homemade English cloth. But to secure those things, English merchants had to find a way to get to them. Initial expeditions sought a way to reach China to initiate direct trade with that mysterious kingdom. Later, opportunities in the New World led to excursions to western climes. The evidence is there that mercantile interests were just as important as any other for early English settlements. At Roanoke, for instance, backers of what would become the famed Lost Colony had a mandate from their backers to seek marketable items which would turn a quick profit on their investment. As a result, among the earliest cargoes shipped back to England from North Carolina's Outer Banks was sassafras, believed at the time by English medicos to cure venereal diseases (which was rampant in the bawdy English society of the time).

Butman and Targett have written a book that deserves the attention of both casual and professional historians interested in the origins story of America and the fable American Dream. Their chronicle of men who braved the elements, indigenous peoples, competing powers, and a wilderness that too often seemed intent on destroying them is a wonderful story. Backed with solid scholarship, written in an entertaining style, it meets all of the requirements of a good history.



Europa: How Europe Shaped the Modern World by Julio Crespo MacLennan (Pegasus Books • 9781681777566 • Hardcover • July 2018)

The current study of history is an all-inclusive tent that welcomes the myriad voices of every viewpoint. You can find studies that approach the past with as many perspectives as there are people to interpret it: women's history, aboriginal history, economic history, Atlantic history, etc. That is all to the good. The richness of the past lies in the fact that we can view it through so many lenses. But the fact that we can sometimes obscures or denigrates the achievements of the old mainstays of historical study by focusing on the unsavory aspects of the pasts they made, or by dismissing the things they accomplished in order to tell history from the viewpoints of others. Julio Crespo MacLennan's book reminds us that for good or ill, we should give those historical actors their due.

No one can deny that Europe, in achieving its place at the pinnacle of world history after the Crusades, committed a number of sins that modern chroniclers of the past are quick to point to. Columbus' interactions with the native peoples he found on the Caribbean islands he explored, for example, garner few accolades among modern historians. Yet the indisputable fact remains that from the Renaissance onward, Europe and Europeans were

the principle shapers of the world we live in today.

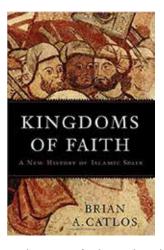
This is a masterful reminder of what Europeans accomplished over the course of several centuries that set the world on the road to what it is today, for good or ill. For all of the mistakes, missteps, atrocities, and less than noble motivations that can be ascribed to Europe's enterprises around the globe since the end of the Middle Ages, the fact still remains that it was those same Europeans who spread virtually every good idea and advancement made by the human race during that same time period.

MacLennan divides his book into chapters that focus on a single aspect of Europe's starring role on the world stage - the Renaissance, the Age of Exploration, the rise of the great European empires, etc. – that spotlight the accomplishments of Europeans and how they molded the world into something new. Despite its titular goal of reminding us just how great those accomplishments were, MacLennon does not shy away from acknowledging the less shining examples of those same peoples. He tips his cap to those who would detract from Europe's contributions to making the modern world by pointing out the by-products of that effort – the extermination and eviction of indigenous peoples, the introduction of slavery, and more. Yet MacLennan argues successfully that despite these dark stains on the record of Europeans in the historical record, we cannot deny their influence in making the world what it is.

This book will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of both world and American historians, as it provides a concise, convincing account of the debt we owe to men and women like Drake, Prince Henry the Navigator, Galileo and Copernicus, Queens Isabella and Elizabeth I, and yes, even the much maligned of late Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Christopher Columbus, for making the modern world what it is. Do not miss it.

Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain by Brian A. Catlos (Basic Books • 9780465055876 • Hardcover • May 2018)

While pigs still rooted in the streets of what would eventually become Paris, the Islamic empires of the Middle



East were beacons of science, learning, art, and literature. The combination of traders, missionaries, and conquering Muslim armies spread the faith of Muhammad into Persia, the Balkans, the Byzantine empire, across North Africa, and into the Iberian Peninsula. That advance was finally blunted when Charles "The Hammer" Martel marshalled an army of Francs to thwart Muslim ambitions at the Battle of Tours. But even after the high tide of Islamic expansion into Europe crested, there still remained one precinct firmly in the grip of the sons of Muhammad – Moorish Spain.

Muslim Spain was a place of complex relationships, where Christians and Jews were afforded respect as "People of the Book," whose prophets Moses and Abraham shared a place in the Islamic pantheon as well as Muhammad. A lesser one, to be sure, but one worthy of respect, nonetheless. As Muslim warriors and trade caravans spread across the Mediterranean world and into Europe, the Umayyad and Abbasid empires reached into southern Europe at the place where the continent comes closest to touching Africa, the Strait of Gibraltar. Building new cities atop the remains of the fallen Roman empire, Muslim Arabs brought more than just a new definition of God to the recently conquered lands. They also brought new art, culture, science, and worldview that would leave an imprint on Spain that remains to this day. The great Andalusian fortress and palace of Alhambra may still be the most easily recognizable artifact of that occupa-

Brian A. Catlos tells history that reads like an adventure story, once again disproving the notion that history must be the stuffy names and dates from our schoolbooks. In the hands of a skilled

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writer, it becomes something more - the story of who we are. In Kingdoms of Faith, Catlos offers an alternative image to the one so prevalent in the west today, of Muslims bent on destroying the world, and instead offers a picture of a time when the Muslim world was the pinnacle of human advancement.



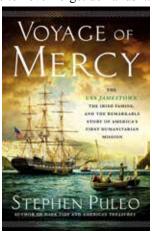
The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11 by Garrett M. Graff (Avid Reader Press • 9781501182204 • Hardcover • 2019)

In high school classrooms today sit the first generation of history students who were born after the tragedy that was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. They recognize the day that changed America in the same abstract way that students born after Pearl Harbor remember the Japanese attack that forever ended America's self-imposed isolation and launched us on the path to becoming a super power and everything that entails. On that day eighteen years ago, we as a nation swore to never forget what happened on that crisp fall morning. Garrett M. Graff's oral history of those events will be an indispensable tool for keeping that promise.

Graff has compiled a book that recounts, in the words of those who played a role in the events of 9/11, the horrible scenes that played out in New York City, at the Pentagon, in a field in western Pennsylvania, and on the televisions of a dumbstruck nation when terrorists weaponized commercial jetliners and crashed them into cherished American landmarks. The loss of life that accompanied these acts was a tragedy that mobilized the nation to strike back in a series of wars and conflicts that have yet to end. The strength of this book is that it brings home to readers the minute by minute immediacy of the

unthinkable events that regular people pilots, flight attendants, and passengers, air traffic controllers, airmen and soldiers, government employees, working people and their families - had to deal with as the tragedy unfolded.

There are other histories of 9/11, several of them quite excellent. But none of them deliver the heartbreak, anguish, dedication, and bravery of those personally touched by the worst attack on the American homeland by a foreign enemy since that infamous day in 1941. Historians are often reluctant to embrace oral histories because they are always vulnerable to inaccuracy and never deliver a full picture of whatever is being remembered. Yet oral history is valuable because at its root history is the story of people, and the recollections of those who experience history bring home the humanity of the events that historians study. The words of the people in Graff's book are in many cases truly heartbreaking, making it a difficult book to read in places. But despite the pain it will elicit in the hearts of most readers, it is an exercise that must be done. The generations that grow up after September 11, 2001 need a book like Graff's to truly know what happened that day. Our promise to never forget demands it.

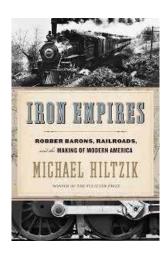


Voyage of Mercy: The USS Jamestown, the Irish Famine, and the Remarkable Story of America's First Humanitarian Mission by Stephen Puleo (St. Martin's Press • 9781250200471 • Hardcover • March 2020)

Today, American relief is a lifeline to the Third World and other countries suffering natural and man-made disasters. A robust aid effort is a testament to the largesse of the American people who have compassion for the plight of those in other places who are not as blessed as those living in the United States. That humanitarian streak has not been with Americans since the nation's inception - at least, not as far as the national government is concerned. Stephen Puleo's new work is a fascinating look at the first time the resources of the United States government were marshalled in the effort to bring humanitarian aid to people of another sovereign nation.

The Irish Potato Famine has rightly been remembered by history as one of the world's great calamities. School kids everywhere associate the famine with a wave of Irish immigration to the United States that had far reaching implications for the future of the nation, at that point still less than a century old. What is less known is that the despair of the Irish, dying of hunger and dispossessed by a ruling English government that seemingly cared nothing at all for their plight, tugged at the heartstrings of Americans like little else had in recent memory. As churches and other civic minded people began collecting donations for Irish relief, the question remained of how to get the goods to the Emerald Isles. Enter Robert Bennet Forbes, naval officer and a sea dog of long standing, who adopted the Irish relief mission as his own moral imperative, spearheading the logistical effort to get the relief to Ireland aboard the USS Jamestown. The Jamestown was a warship of the US Navy, drafted into service under Forbes' command, to get the donated food and other materials to where it was so desperately needed. The trip was fraught with danger, and proved to be a remarkable feat that provided a blueprint and tradition for American relief efforts that continues today.

Puleo has drawn vivid characters in Forbes and Catholic clergyman Theobald Mathew, whose outrage over the poor and starving in Ireland led him to become a crusader against English neglect. The success of Mathew's campaign to shame and cajole the government into providing food to the Irish was debatable at best, but he became a hero to the Irish on whose behalf he argued. *Voyage of Mercy* is a splendid adventure tale, rooted in the misery of a desperate people looking for kindness and God's grace in the face of unimaginable tragedy.



Iron Empires: Robber Barons, Railroads, and the Making of America by Michael Hiltzik (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt • 9780544770317 • Hardcover • August 2020)

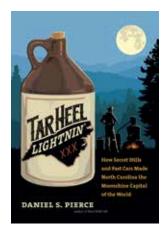
The Industrial Revolution transformed the world, and in America that transformation was nowhere more evident than in the rise of the railroads that would connect the disparate sections of the country and turn the United States into a truly continental nation. Men like Jay Gould and Cornelius Vanderbilt became, depending on your opinion of them, either Captains of Industry or Robber Barons. Their wealth was unlike anything ever seen before in the United States, buying them entry to the elite circles of American society and influence the politicians whose endorsement they needed to carry out their plans. Michael Hiltzik's new book about the growth of nineteenth century railroads and the men who built them is a treat.

The story of the Gilded Age giants of industry has been told before. J.P. Morgan, Vanderbilt, Gould, John D. Rockerfeller, and Andrew Carnegie all left their mark on American history by ruthlessly pursuing their dreams of reaching the pinnacle of capitalism, often at the expense of the very people who helped them build their empires. Hiltzik focuses on the efforts by the railroad magnates to unify the patchwork of smaller sectional railways into one interconnected national network that could move industry, people, and commerce from one coast to the other and to all points in between.

The success of Vanderbilt, Gould, and the others stemmed in large part from the power they wielded in business and government. Rivals though they were,

they were not above fixing the prices of the goods they carried to eliminate competition and insure their profit margins. Those who objected had little recourse to remedy the situation, legal or otherwise. It was not until a mustachioed bundle of energy named Theodore Roosevelt won the White House that the robber barons finally ran up against a dynamo as capable and determined as they were. T.R.'s trust busting crusade played a big role in bringing the railroad men to heel, curbing the worst of their excesses. Later Eugene V. Debs would prove a formidable foe when he organized working men to withhold the only thing they had to bargain with - their labor - in the fight for better wages and working conditions in the railroad industry.

A reporter by trade, Hiltzik brings his storytelling skills to bear on the subject of a fascinating chapter of American history. The result is a story that is well worth your time.



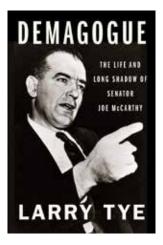
Tar Heel Lightnin': How Secret Stills and Fast Cars Made North Carolina the Moonshine Capital of the World by Daniel S. Pierce (UNC Press • 9781469653556 • Hardcover • October 2019)

You would have to live under a rock not to know the link between NASCAR and the moonshine bootleggers who used fast cars and a whole lot of gumption to outsmart and outrun revenue agents intent on stopping the flow of illicit alcohol from stills tucked away in the hills and hollers of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. In *Tar Heel Lightnin'*, Daniel S. Pierce may have written the definitive history of bootlegging in the Old North State.

North Carolina has always had a love/hate relationship with alcohol. As a Baptist stronghold, the teetotaler influence

on local and state legislation made the sale and consumption of spirits difficult even before the passage of Prohibition made alcohol illegal nationwide. But Nature abhors a vacuum, and as long as there were people willing to pay for liquor, there were men in the state who were willing to meet that demand. White, Black, Native American, rich, poor, blue and white collar - those who engaged in bootlegging could not be pigeonholed into one specific demographic or another. From the swampy coastal lowlands of Brunswick County, to the tree shrouded hillsides of the Smokey Mountains, North Carolina has always been ground zero for the production, sale, and consumption of homemade hootch.

Pierce's book looks at Tar Heel bootlegging with a wide lens, weaving the colorful history of moonshiners into a volume that gives pride of place to the people whose copper pots and hot rods provided the liquid nectar that allowed North Carolinians to wet their whistles no matter what the current law of the land said.



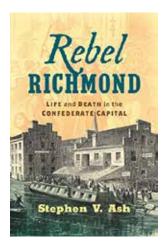
Demagogue: The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joe McCarthy by
Larry Tye (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
• 9781328959720 • Hardcover • July
2020)

Joseph McCarthy, the junior senator from Wisconsin in the years when Americans liked Ike and the Red Menace represented by Cold War rivals in Moscow had people afraid of nuclear oblivion, is today something of a bogeyman. Since his rapid rise and fall, McCarthy has become the poster boy for political bullies, a cautionary tale for "we, the people" of what can happen when chasing our fears allows us to forget both the Constitution and our better angels.

Joe McCarthy wrecked lives. Careers were ruined, and reputations were destroyed. McCarthy>s zeal to ferret out hidden communists in America, often with little or no evidence, even drove some of his victims to commit suicide. His power was such that even national heroes like Dwight D. Eisenhower, of World War II fame and beloved president, was wary of getting on McCarthy>s wrong side. It was not until McCarthy went too far by accusing the army of a Red infestation that the people saw him for the bully he was. The new technology of television, which brought McCarthy>s witch hunt hearings into American living rooms, helped turn the people away from McCarthy's crusade by letting people see not just the senator, but his brow beating techniques for themselves.

Yet as any good writer will tell you, nobody is purely evil or good, and black and white only exists on the pages of a book. Villains, like heroes, are all differing shades of gray, with things commendable and deplorable in each. Joseph McCarthy was no different. Larry Tye's new biography, based on a wealth of new material inaccessible for more than half a century, reveals that to be true. Thousands of pages of the senator's own papers were made exclusively available to Tye, from government documents to private love letters, revealing a man whose contradictions were fascinating.

Joe McCarthy has rightfully earned the position he holds in American history. What he did, largely in pursuit of gilding his own reputation and political aspirations, was counter to everything the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were intended to protect against, and Americans largely cheered him on until his excesses crossed a line even the most zealous anticommunist could not abide. Yet no less than the widow of Robert Kennedy remembers a private Joe McCarthy that was «fun,» and who loved to hold the Kennedy's young toddler. Of course, none of that outweighs the damage McCarthy did, or diminish his place at the top of America's pantheon of demagogues. Larry Tye, already recognized as an accomplished biographer, has perhaps penned his best work yet in telling McCarthy's story with a depth that has never been done before.



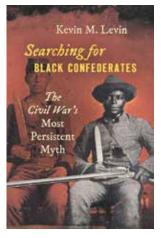
Rebel Richmond: Life and Death in the Confederate Capital by Stephen V. Ash
(UNC Press • 9781469650982 • Hardcover • August 2019)

Like Wilmington, North Carolina's largest city at the time of the split between the American North and South, Richmond, Virginia was thrust into the limelight of the great national crucible that was the Civil War when it was chosen as the capital of the eleven states seeking to break away from the Union to form their own nation, one based on the perpetuation of slavery. Stephen V. Ash has done an admirable job of bringing the city to life through the use of diaries, journals, and other recognized and new primary sources to tell its story.

The population of Richmond, Virginia exploded seemingly overnight. Suddenly civilians and slaves found themselves competing with soldiers and politicians for suddenly scare resources. Local needs were often made secondary to the needs of the Confederate government and the military forces assembled there to fend off the Union Army sent to reduce the rebelling capital. Through recognized voices like that of Mary Boykin Chestnut and others, Ash has painted a portrait of a city both under siege and at the center of the Southern effort to secure their own independence.

The voices are not all white, and not all well known. Slaves and others outside the social circle of people like Mrs. Chestnut make the story Ash presents richer and more detailed. Issues of domesticity blend with issues of crime, commerce, government, and military necessity to give readers a vivid picture of what life was

like at the epicenter of the Confederate states' effort to go their own way.



Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth by Kevin M. Levin (UNC Press • 9781469653266 • Hardcover • September 2019)

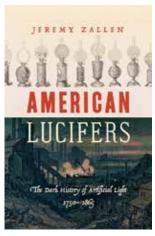
African Americans played a role in the Civil War in a multitude of ways - working farms and plantations, loading and unloading ships at Confederate ports, tending homes and raising children of Southern families, and doing a thousand other tasks that Southern slave owners had come to depend on them for in a society based on the institution of slavery. But the notion that blacks willingly served the Confederate cause in any significant way is a myth, that Kevin M. Levin puts to rest definitively in this offering from UNC Press' Civil War America series.

Black faces in old daguerreotypes showing African Americans seemingly ready to join the ranks of the Southern cause are simply not true. While it was not at all unusual for conscripted slave labor to be used in the construction of Confederate fortifications at places like Fort Fisher, guarding the port city of Wilmington on the North Carolina coast, there just is no evidence that African Americans willingly joined ranks to fight for the South. Most blacks who saw Civil War fighting were there as footmen and valets to white Confederates, who did and always would consider the African Americans who followed them across the battlefields of Virginia, Tennessee, and elsewhere as slaves.

Kevin M. Levin traces the origins of the idea that blacks - both free and enslaved - found common cause with whites in the war to the Lost Cause myth,

the rebranding of Southern involvement in tearing the nation asunder that began almost before the last cannons had cooled. In particular, Levin points to the backlash against African American gains of the Civil Rights era as the point when old pictures of blacks with white Confederate soldiers provided fodder for the notion that the effort to form a Southern nation based on the perpetuation of slavery found purchase with the very people who would be in bondage under that system.

Levin's book is short, well researched, and eminently readable. More importantly, it offers a firm rebuttal to the persistent idea that blacks/slaves in any way endorsed the war being fought to keep them enslaved.



American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light, 1750-1865 by Jeremy Zallen (UNC Press • 9781469653327 • Hardcover • October 2019)

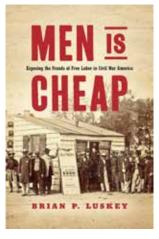
In the Bible, God is quoted as saying, "Let there be light," and there was. For humans, the process was never quite that neat. The omnipresence of artificial illumination is taken for granted by moderns, but bringing light to the darkness has often been a laborious - even dangerous - endeavor.

From whalers risking life and limb to harpoon the great leviathans coveted for their blubber that fueled the lamps of landlubbers, to slaves roaming the great forests of longleaf pines in the Carolina low country, tapping the wildly pungent and flammable rosin used in naval stores and for lighting, Jeremy Zallen's book is an illuminating look at the effort to hold the dark at bay, and the consequences the demand for light created.

Those consequences were

considerable. For each of the celebrated inventors like Thomas Edison who helped push back the darkness, there are countless others who labored to provide the fuel that pre-electric lighting required. Then there are the changes that a Edison's steady source of cheap, clean lighting had on a world in the throes of the Industrial Revolution. Light meant work did not stop when night fell. Light meant cities did not roll up their sidewalks at dusk anymore. Light meant citizens could stroll down city streets confident that their chances of falling victim to those of evil intent was at least lessened to the point of acceptable risk.

What Zallen has done in this book is explored not just how artificial lighting has evolved, but also how it has impacted how we live, work, and play. As well, he spotlights the cost and consequences of our drive to let there be light.



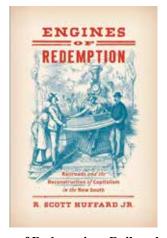
Men Is Cheap: Exposing the Fraud of Free Labor in Civil War America by Brian P. Luskey (UNC Press • 9781469654324 • Hardcover • March 2020)

For laborers in America, the only leverage they have ever had is the sweat of their brows. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, workers began to flex that muscle collectively. Episodes like that of the Haymarket riots, labor strikes, and other clashes with management gave rise to a labor movement that to at least some degree forced concessions that bettered the lot of the American working man and woman. But all of that came after what many consider the defining moment of post-revolutionary America, the Civil War. And in that conflagration, as author Brian P. Luskey says in the title of his new book,

men were cheap.

If the South relied on the free labor of the enslaved to prop up its society, in the North something similar existed. While not exactly chattel slavery, the system of a wage labor economy reduced immigrants and the poor and marginalized to doing whatever tasks were demanded of them in return for whatever pay was tendered. The only people who seemed to make profit in the exchange were the employers who secured workers to generate profits, and the middle men who acted as labor brokers.

Even as it was occurring, many people found the practices of these "intelligence offices" distasteful and predatory. Yet without them, the Union effort to end the Southern rebellion would have looked much different, and likely taken much longer. In Luskey's book, the old adage about it being best to not know how the sausage is made might apply equally well to how the North found the workers it needed to preserve the Union.



Engines of Redemption: Railroads and the Reconstruction of Capitalism in the New South by R. Scott Huffard, Jr. (UNC Press • 9781469652801 • Hardcover • December 2019)

When Atlanta newspaper man Henry Grady unveiled the term New South, he was pitching the idea that the recently defeated Confederate states were ready to rejoin the American economy. He extolled the resources the region offered for businessmen astute enough to recognize the opportunities to be found below the Mason Dixon line - cheap labor, friendly governments, and natural resources in abundance.

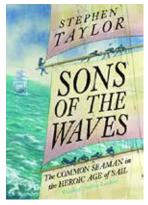
One key element of the formula was the burgeoning network of regional

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railways that connected one part of the nation to the rest. Many former elites of the old antebellum South, stripped of their plantation-centric way of life by the Civil War and the demise of slavery, looked upon the iron horses of the railroads as an alternative means of securing their fortunes. Huffard examines the effort to revitalize the Southern economy via an enthusiastic embrace of capitalism facilitated by the railroads crisscrossing the Southern landscape.

Railroads became the economic engine of the reborn South, carrying materials and goods from growers and manufacturers to markets and transshipment points in the North, Gulf, and West. But at the same time that commerce was traveling those steel arteries of capitalism, so were less commendable byproducts of the railroads. Disease, crime, deadly accidents and more also came of the reliance on railroads to revitalize the Southern economy. Greed led to monopolies that were the antithesis of capitalistic competition. Their control over the railways was also used as a tool to suppress newly freed ex-slaves. The challenge for railroads was to accentuate the positive while making the less attractive features of their business an acceptable cost of progress.

Huffard has penned an enlightening look at the role railroads played in the rebirth of a war-torn part of the nation, and in the process shown once again that progress is never without cost. A worthwhile read for students of the Civil War and its aftermath.



Sons of the Waves: A History of the Common Sailor, 1740-1840 by Stephen Taylor (Yale University Press • 978-0300245714 • Hardcover • May 2020)

There is something romantic about the sea and the men who sail it. That's why

the historical fiction of C.S. Forrester, Dewey Lambdin, Patrick O'Brien, and others have been staples in the libraries of those who seek adventure aboard the tall ships from the Age of Sail. Brian Lavery did yeoman's work in titles like *Nelson's Navy: The Ships, Men, and Organisation, 1793-1815* to detail the ships themselves. Now Stephen Taylor has done the same for the Jack Tars who sailed them in this superb book that focuses on the nuts and bolts of serving as crew aboard a sailing ship.

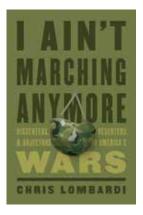
Taylor's "sons of the waves" were a far cry from the great men of the quarterdeck like Nelson and Sir Peter Parker. This book focuses on the tars whose callused feet and hands turned the captain's orders into reality, and in the process created a British empire that spanned the globe. Largely illiterate, of simple tastes, and apolitical beyond fighting whatever enemy they were aimed at, these seafaring men were the sinews that gave Great Britain a reach that covered the world.

Taylor goes into wonderful detail about the day to day lives of the men who lived below decks under the great sheets of canvas bent to the wind above them. It was not an easy life. Ships of the Age of Sail were dangerous even in peacetime, and day to day operations could turn deadly in the blink of an eye even without the roar of cannon. The light he shines on the lives of these sons of Neptune is fascinating

For decades Brian Lavery has been the go-to guy for details about the men and ships of Britain's Royal Navy. Now Stephen Taylor has earned his place alongside him with *Sons of the Waves*.

I Ain't Marching Anymore: Dissenters, Deserters, & Objectors to America's Wars by Chris Lombardi (The New Press • 9781620973172 • Hardcover • November 2020)

The concept of the conscientious objector to military service is an old one in American military history, but one that is often looked at with a grudging allowance for those who claim it if not outright disdain. The objector whose conscience, faith, or political persuasion prohibits them from answering he nation's call in times of war are often painted with the brush



of cowardice. At its root, the question is one of personal belief versus the obligation a citizen has to contribute to the common defense. Philadelphia journalist Chris Lombardi has produced a work that explores the phenomenon from the earliest days of the Republic through the modern conflicts of the last two decades.

I Ain't Marching Anymore explores the motivations behind the people who opt out of military service from the Revolutionary War to Iraq and Afghanistan. The conscientious objector has always been a part of the story of American wars, from the Quakers who chose to follow their faith instead of George Washington in the war against King George III (Nathaniel "The Fighting Quaker" Greene excepted), to the hordes of young men who fled to Canada rather than find themselves in Vietnam, to modern soldiers whose service in the post 9/11 American wars soured them on the mission and their participation in it. The choices these people made are weighty ones, often inflicting psychological damage to those who decide to buck societal expectations to follow their own conflicting moral compass.

Lombardi brings a storyteller's flair to the accounts she includes in her new volume.Lombardi embraces a style that keeps the human elements of the stories at the forefront. That's a good thing, because the topic is one that is too easy to file under the headings of cowardice or a lack of patriotism. But from Alvin York, to Desmond Doss, to modern objectors like Chelsea Manning, American's have a long history of marching against the tide when it comes to fighting America's wars. Lombardi's new book is an engrossing read that makes understanding their motives a little easier, even if one might not personally agree with them.