

# FORT MACON RAMPARTS

a newsletter of the Friends of Fort Macon

Fall 1994

## CANNON MYSTERY UNCOVERED

by Paul Branch, Fort Macon Historian

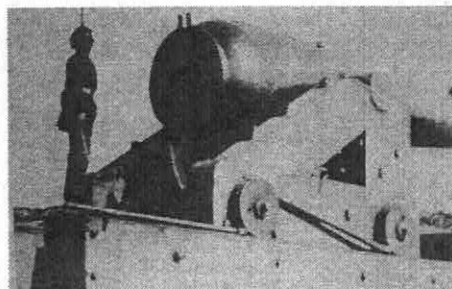
**DID YOU KNOW:**

### Where Fort Macon's Guns Went?

*Fort Macon possessed over 50  
heavy seacoast cannons.*

The Friends of Fort Macon have long had as a goal the purchase of a suitable reproduction of at least one of Fort Macon's cannons to be mounted on the walls. At the same time it might be asked "Where did the fort's original cannons go and why can they not be brought back?" Fair Question. Here is what we know about the fort's original cannons:

During the Civil War Fort Macon possessed over 50 heavy seacoast cannons. Most of this armament of 24- and 32-pounders and 8- and 10-inch Columbiads were supplied by the Confederates. Union forces retained most of this armament when they captured the fort in 1862, and added a few others such as two 100-pounder Parrott Rifles and two 10-inch siege mortars. After the Civil War, however, it was felt there was no further need to have so many old, now-obsolete smoothbore cannons, especially as some of Fort Macon's 24-pounders were over 30 years old. In 1866, Ordnance Department



100-Pounder Parrott Rifle

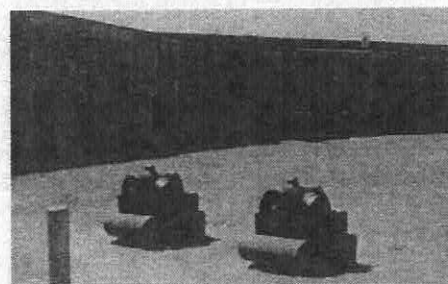
officials ordered the 10 remaining 24-pounders at Fort Macon condemned and sold. In addition, 18 remaining 32-pounders were likewise condemned but, because they were old Navy 32-pounders which Confederates had obtained from the Norfolk Navy Yard in 1861, they were ordered to be returned to the Navy Department for disposition. In 1967 these latter guns were shipped to the New York Navy Yard for final disposition. Usually old condemned guns such as these were sold off by the Ordnance Department for their metal value. Sometimes the guns were physically broken up by driving rows of cold chisels into them until they cracked apart.

**FORT MACON  
SETS ATTENDANCE  
RECORD FOR JULY  
VISITORS TOP 230,000**

During the 1870's, Fort Macon's armament consisted of two 10-inch Columbiads, five 8-inch Columbiads, four rifled 32-pounders, six 24-pounder howitzers, two 100-pounder Parrott Rifles, Two 10-inch siege mortars, and two 12-pounder "Napoleon" field pieces. At some point prior to 1877, when the fort was deactivated at the end of Reconstruction, all these guns apparently were condemned and sold with the exception of six. These six - two 100-pounder Parrott Rifles, two 10-inch siege mortars, and two 12-pounder Napoleons - were retained as fort armament until the turn of the century. During the Spanish-American War of

1898, these six venerable old guns were remounted by the Engineer Department and would have been the fort's defense if Spanish warships had dared to enter Beaufort Inlet.

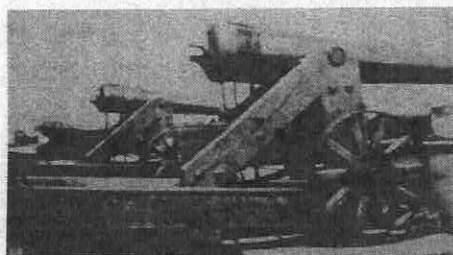
At the turn of the century, Fort Macon's last six guns were removed. Back on May 22, 1896, Congress had approved an Act which authorized that old condemned Civil War-era cannon still on hand in arsenals and military posts could be donated to cities, veteran organizations and soldier homes as monuments. It is by this Act that so many old Civil War cannons now rest today on town greens, in cemeteries and in front of public buildings. In February, 1900 the city of Spartanburg, S.C. applied for the two 100-pounder Parrott Rifle cannons at Fort Macon and were given them by the Ordnance Department under date of February 23, 1900, along with 40 cannonballs. Spartanburg had the guns dismounted from the fort and ferried across the harbor to the railroad depot in Morehead City, where they



Original Fort Macon Mortars

were carried by rail to Spartanburg. The two guns and cannonballs were subsequently mounted to flank a statue of Revolutionary War hero Daniel Morgan in "Morgan Square" in downtown Spartanburg. Unfortunately, during World War II, these two guns were melted down in a scrap drive and no longer exist.

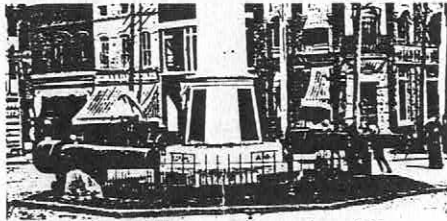
Of the remaining four guns at Fort Macon, the two 12-pounder Napoleons were ordered turned over to the Augusta Arsenal, Ga., since bronze cannons such as they were exempted from donation under the 1896 Act. In December, 1901 they were turned



Rifled 32-pounder at Fort Macon, 1867 (foreground), 100-pounder Parrott Rifle (background).

## Where are the guns? *Cont. from pg. 1*

back in to the Augusta Arsenal. In 1902, the city of Raleigh, N.C. applied for the last two Fort Macon guns, the two 10-inch siege mortars, to go in front of the old Confederate Soldier's Home on New Bern Avenue in accordance with the 1896 Act. This was granted on May 28, 1902 and the mortars later were taken by rail to Raleigh. They sat in front of the Soldier's Home until 1944, when they were moved to the front of the Agriculture Department Building. In 1953 they ended up being returned to Fort Macon -



*Morgan Monument, Spartanburg, S.C.*

almost by accident. Park Service officials asked if they might be used at Fort Macon as examples of the kinds of guns used against the fort in the 1862 battle and the City of Raleigh expressed no objection to giving them to the Park Service. No one seemed to realize at the time that they had originally come from Fort Macon to begin with. Thus two of the fort's original guns are now back at the fort.

Do any of the other guns condemned and turned in to arsenals still exist? No. Those turned in from Fort Macon in the 1860's and 1870's probably were sold off and broken up. Any still remaining in the Arsenals after 1896 were doled out as monuments under the 1896 Act and are scattered around the country today. No effort seems to have been made to keep track of any serial or foundry numbers on these guns so it would not be possible now to track them down and determine if any of the old guns given out from the arsenals after 1896 might have once been some of the ones turned in from Fort Macon in the 1860's and 1870's. It is sufficient to say they are all gone today other than the two mortars in the fort. Thus, if cannons are ever to grace Fort Macon's ramparts again, they probably will have to be modern reproductions.

### SHARE THE GOOD NEWS DON'T DISCARD THIS NEWSLETTER

*Please give it to a friend or neighbor so that  
they too will want to help support the Fort.*

## THIS IS THE SEASON FOR GIVING!

For those hard-to-shop-for people on your Christmas gift list consider a gift membership in the Friends of Fort Macon.

Each recipient of a gift membership will receive a nice card from the Friends informing them of your gift. Everybody wins when you give a membership in the Friends of Fort Macon.

## The Heritage of the Civil War

One of every five participants in the Civil War died in service. While 126,000 Americans died in World War I and 407,000 in World War II, more than 618,000 Americans were victims of the Civil War. The North lost a total of 360,022 men, of whom 67,058 were killed in action and 43,012 died of battle wounds. Extant records for the Confederacy do not provide complete statistics, yet certainly about 258,000 Southern soldiers died of all causes in the war. Approximately 94,000 of these were battle fatalities.

The biggest killers of troops in the 1860's were not bullets and shells but sickness and disease. Some 400,000 men perished from such maladies as diarrhea, dysentery, measles, smallpox, chicken pox, typhoid fever, pneumonia, and gangrene. Intestinal disorders alone killed more than 57,000 Federal soldiers. Since proper food and sanitation were even more lacking on the Confederate side, the number of deaths among Southern troops from diarrhea and associated illnesses was proportionately higher. But the suffering does not stop there. At least 1,000,000 men were seriously wounded or severely ill during the war. Unquestionably, lingering effects of these disablements continued in most cases for years after the fighting ceased.

Human loss cannot be measured in terms of dollars. Materially speaking, the war cost the United States more than \$15,000,000,000 in property destroyed, fields burned bare, material expended, and institutions both created and eliminated. The price tags of America's legacy of such items as a ruined South, military occupation, years of political corruption directly attributable to the war, partisan excesses, discrimination, and intolerance can never be computed.

The heritage of hate that the Civil War engendered mellowed appreciably with the passage of time. Veterans on both sides peri-

odically gathered at the great battle sites to relive deeds of daring and to exchange anecdotes and compliments with former enemies. Their ability to forgive was an inspiration to future generations.

The Civil War holds undying fascination for people all over the world. Americans have probably read more about the war than the rest of man's history combined. More than 60,000 books and articles have appeared since the gunsmoke cleared, and the stream of literary works shows no sign of drying up. For the Civil War was "our" war. It pitted American against American, brother against brother, father against son. The deeds of valor and sacrifice performed countless times by either Blue or Gray are heroics in which all Americans can take pride.

Moreover, the lines of dissension were never quite clear. Contestants in most wars appear vividly as either black or white. Yet the whole Civil War seemed to hover in gray shadows. Each side maintained that it was fighting for the America envisioned by the Founding Fathers. Delaware, a slave state, remained in the Union; antislaveryites Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson fought for the Confederacy. In 1861, future Confederate generals Joseph E. Johnston and James Longstreet were serving in the U.S. Army - while future Union general William T. Sherman was living in the South. Mrs. Abraham Lincoln had two brothers and a brother-in-law who gave their lives fighting under the Stars and Bars.

No nation has ever fought itself and, a scant 100 years later, been bound by so many ties of nationalism and brotherhood as now characterize America. The progress of the United States, after a war that would seem to have left wounds too deep for healing, is a memorial to Americans of every age and creed who were willing to bind up the nation's wounds and march ahead confidently into the future.

*"History of the Civil War" Acorn Press*



# Fort Macon - after the Battle

By Charles O. Pitts, Jr.

The war years found Fort Macon occupied by troops from New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and "Volunteer" North Carolinians of the Union Army. Commanders ranged in rank from 1st Lieutenant to Colonel. In addition to the Garrison troops, military prisoners were also confined at Fort Macon beginning in 1863.

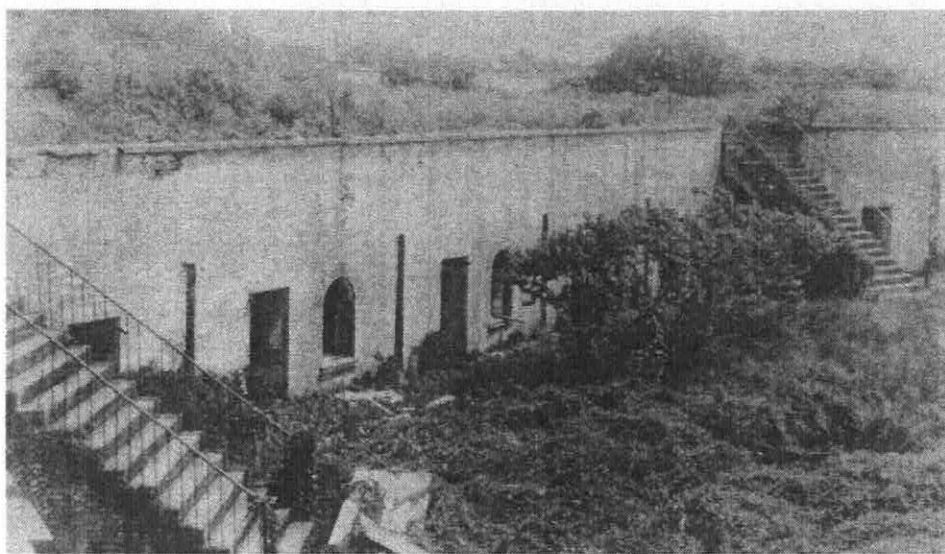
On July 7, 1865, in the Nation's Capitol, four graves would be dug, four prisoners brought in and four hanged - executed for their roles in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The other four convicted conspirators were to be taken for confinement to Fort Jefferson on Dry Tortugas off Key West, Florida. The preceding day, at Fort Macon Lieutenant Colonel Walter Poor of the 14th US Colored Artillery finished his report and prepared to dispatch it across Bogue Sound. He had only just taken Command and his inspection of the installation could not have pleased him. Conditions of the physical facilities were certainly neither in a state of Military readiness nor "wholesome" - either for his garrison or for the prisoners they were guarding. His predecessor, Captain Ira B. Sampson of the 2nd Massachusetts Artillery had left him with 119 confinees.

July 6, 1865

Asst. Adj. Gen., District of Beaufort, NC

Captain:

*In obedience to the order of Brevet Major Gen. Paine I have the honor to make the following report of the condition of this Fort.*



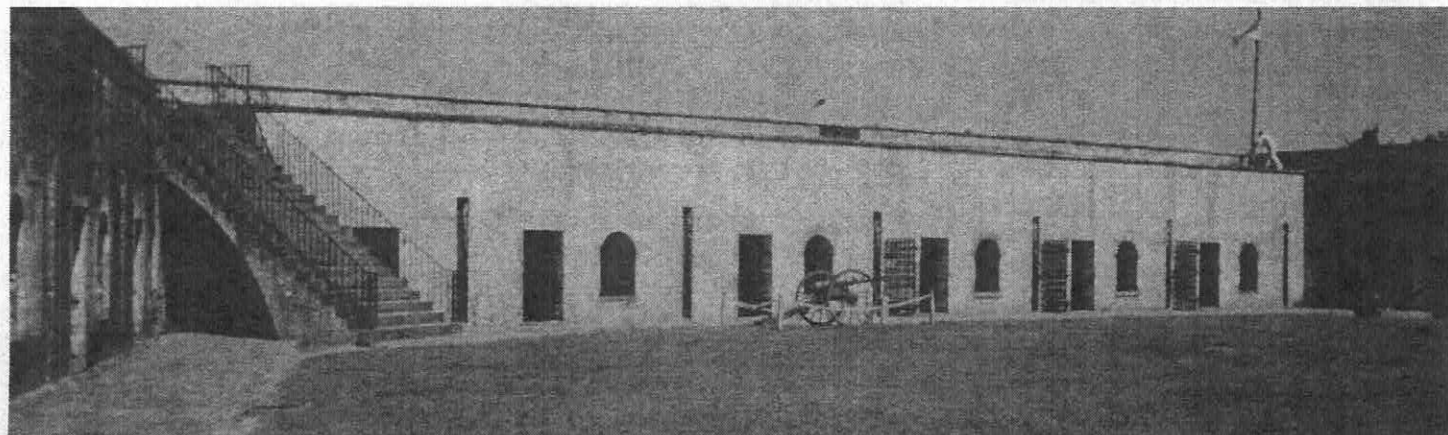
July 1926

*The glacis is in tolerably good condition. The sod upon the greater barbion being firm and hard. From the nature of the soil it is easily injured and in many places is somewhat cut up. This can be remedied late in the Fall or early in the Spring when the fall of rain is abundant by spreading a thin coat of manure over the ground and sowing grass seed. The outwork or covered-way is in fair condition although large weeds have been permitted to grow so luxuriously that their shade has completely killed the grass. These weeds have been cut down and the grass on all the slopes has been trimmed in order to preserve the sod as much as possible.*

*None of the Guns in this portion of the fortification are numbered. The Carriages and Chassis all need painting. Many of them are so old and so badly cracked and*

*warped as to be almost worthless. Some are quite rotten. The Traverse Circles and Pintle Blocks being for the most part made of masonry are in good condition. The wooden ones, three in number, are wholly out of repair and nearly useless. The Sleepers as well as the planks of the platforms are rotten and worn and the pintle blocks and traverse circles are all in the same condition. These wooden platforms and traverse circles are used for 8 and 10 inch Columbiads mounted on center pintle carriages. In my opinion it would be dangerous to fire these guns even with blank Cartridges. The mortar platforms, three in number, are in the same condition.*

*The Stairways to the plank casements or casoniers (sic) are all dark, damp and unwholesome. The bridges across the ditch*



July 1994

## ANSWERS TO REQUESTS IN LAST NEWSLETTER

**FILING NEEDS** - Shirley Moberg graciously offered to set up a filing system. This has been accomplished.  
**WORLD WAR II BRIDES** — with Fort Macon ties.

Gerry Bevrige has presented a wonderful packet of letters, pictures, David Bevrige's dog tags, wedding invitation plus an interesting paper on Dave and Gerry's lives.

## ... after the battle.

Cont. from pg. 3

are out of repair many of the plank being rotten and pieces of the railing broken. These can be easily repaired if the Quartermaster's Department will furnish the lumber. The walls of the Fort, inside and out, have been painted several times. Each time apparently with a different color. This paint was cracked and peeled off in many places showing here a patch of blue, there a patch of yellow, and in an other place a piece of brown - giving the whole a very unsightly appearance. This paint is necessary to preserve the bricks from the corroding effect of the sea air. When the bricks are exposed they crumble at the touch.

Foundations of the work have sunken irregularly and the walls in many places are badly cracked and shattered. The southwest face was severely injured at the time of its capture by Major General Burnside. This has been repaired as far as possible but in some places the walls cracked so badly that in some places they must always be weak. The repairs exhibit a mass of blotches that should be covered by paint.

The Guns in the inner work have been numbered and the carriages are as a general thing in a better state of repair than those in the covered-way or outwork. Many of them however are cracked or decayed and are ill fitted for hard service. Here as well as in the work most of the Traverse Circles and Pintle Blocks are of masonry and are in good condition. The wooden ones are all more or less decayed and are in my opinion unsafe

and unservicable. These are used for the heaviest guns in the Fort - "big" 8 and 10 inch Columbiads.

The exterior slope of the parapet is in bad condition. Weeds have been permitted to grow so rank that they have shaded the grass and in many places the sod has been trodden and broken up. Wherever the sod has been broken the wind has drawn away the loose sand and increased the injury. It will be difficult to repair this damage until the wet season sets in. The weeds have been cut, the grass trimmed and no one is permitted to go upon the parapet except on duty. Good sod cannot be obtained near the Fort. As soon as there is sufficient moisture to prevent manure from drying up it can be put in complete repair. The top of the rampart is not in complete repair, the surface being irregular and uneven.

(Taken from the records of the National Archives.)



## Upcoming Programs

### December

Down East Christmases  
Sonny Williamson  
Author, Historian, Raconteur

### January

Fort Macon's Impact on Tourism  
Jack Goldstein, Chair  
Tourism Development Board  
Carteret County

### February

Blacks and their relationship with  
Confederate Forces  
Gene Dugan  
Writer-Historian

## CIVIL WAR LECTURE SERIES

Gene Dugan, Chair of the Civil War Lecture Series, announces the Series will be held February, March and April, the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:30 PM, Carteret County Museum of History. Speakers to be announced.

## A Letter From Another Commanding Officer—

"It is impracticable for me to convey a just idea of the discomforts of this Station to which the enlisted men are subjected during the warm weather: in their damp confined quarters, there is no air, outside on the glacis or elsewhere, there is no shade to rest in, and no shelter from the direct or reflected heat, with saturated clothing, and the poorest beef for food, and tepid water. There is no escape or recreation in the Vicinity."

"As to myself, I will say, I have never before been subjected to so many deprivation of the necessities of life."

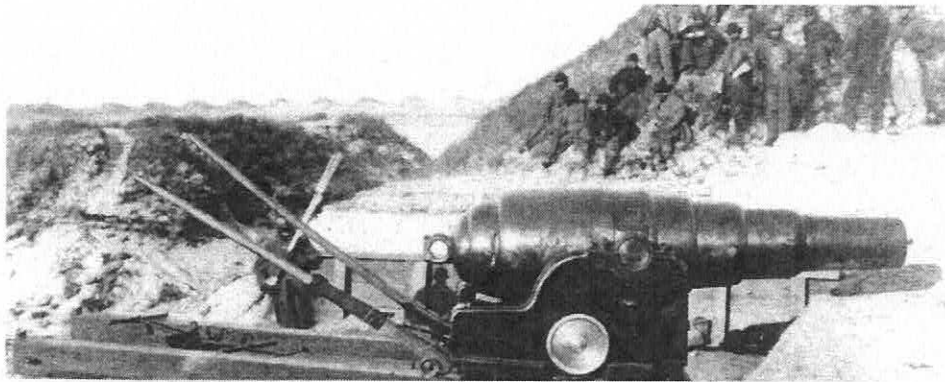
John Rodgers, Capt.  
Sept. 13, 1875

John Rodgers was an 1861 graduate of the Military Academy. He served primarily in the west (Louisiana) during the War and arrived at Fort Macon in November of 1872. He was only one of many Commanders of the garrisons there but one might note that his tenure of some four plus years (until January 1877) provided him ample time to assess and report on conditions physical, structural and psychological. He was not alone.

We have read and heard much of the "peace dividend" that will accrue now that the war on Communism has been won. In the aftermath of the American Civil War, as with all conflicts that Americans have fought, the Armed Forces were not only reduced in numbers but were subjected to lower Congressional Appropriations. During the year of 1995 we will commemorate the 130th anniversary of the end of the Civil War here in North Carolina. It is appropriate to look back at our most popular visitor attraction and recall the years of neglect suffered by the Fort and the travail of her garrisons.

**PRESERVATION IS THE ULTIMATE RECYCLING!**





Cannon at Ft. Fisher

## Needed Enhancements For The Fort *Can You Help?*

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 32-Pounder (Barrel & Carriage) .....       | \$40,000.00 |
| Hot Shot Furnace .....                     | 25,000.00   |
| Bake Oven .....                            | 11,000.00   |
| Cabinets/Metal Storage Units .....         | 5,000.00    |
| Manikins (3) .....                         | 3,600.00    |
| Uniforms & Weapons for Manikins            |             |
| Artillery Shell Jacket (Pre-War) .....     | \$ 75.00    |
| Trousers (Pre-War) .....                   | 60.00       |
| M1839 Forage Cap .....                     | 40.00       |
| Shoes (3 Pair) .....                       | 300.00      |
| Civil War Jacket .....                     | 75.00       |
| Civil War Trousers .....                   | 60.00       |
| Civil War Kepi .....                       | 30.00       |
| M1884 Campaign Shirt (S-A War) .....       | 50.00       |
| Trousers (S-A War) .....                   | 60.00       |
| Campaign Hat (S-A War) .....               | 50.00       |
| Rifles, Muskets .....                      | 1,000.00    |
| Restore Powder Magazine .....              | 6,000.00    |
| Museum Artifacts .....                     | 4,000.00    |
| 1 M1816 Percussion Musket .....            | \$900.00    |
| 2 M1903 Springfield Rifles .....           | 800.00      |
| 1 Uniform Coat, Union .....                | 2,500.00    |
| 1 M1861-63 Springfield Rifle .....         | 800.00      |
| Copy Machine for Fort .....                | \$4,000.00  |
| Slide Bank .....                           | 1,000.00    |
| Duplicate Deteriorating Slides (250) ..... | 250.00      |
| Fire Proof File Cabinet .....              | 1,200.00    |
| Reference Books .....                      | 300.00      |
| Hardware for 6-Pounder Cannon .....        | 125.00      |
| World War II Uniform Items .....           | 175.00      |
| 1 OD Field Jacket M1941 (Repro) .....      | \$125.00    |
| 1 OD Trousers .....                        | 50.00       |

### POSSIBLE BOARD VACANCIES

If you are interested in serving on the Board or know a member who might be, please contact Janet Plough, secretary, 726-6901.

The Friends of Fort Macon's Board also has a number of standing committees. If you are interested in the replacement of the cannons, membership, finance, publicity or public relations please let us know.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

The summer is over and we at the Park are breathing a collective sigh of relief. This summer was the busiest that we have ever had at Fort Macon. From June through August we had 620,920 visitors in the Park.

Fort Macon will have two bond projects to work on this coming winter. We were allocated \$875,500 to start Phase I Restoration to the fort. We hope to be able to waterproof the ceilings on all of the casemates, and repair the windows and much of the wood work in the casemates. Also scheduled to be replaced is the dehumidification system for the restored rooms, and the drainage system in the Moat will be upgraded. The above repairs are the bare minimum needed for the Fort. We hope that more funding will be coming in future years.

There was also \$110,000 allocated for an Archaeological Survey and the production of working drawings for a Coastal Education Center or Visitor Center for Fort Macon. We hope to be able to get enough money in the future to build this center. This center will allow us to greatly increase the interpretative opportunities that the Park can offer. We will also be able to move our offices into this building, which will allow us to meet the new A.D.A. requirements.

In December we hope to start construction on a pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the main road going through the Park. The Department of Transportation will pave the road shoulders 4' wider to allow more room for people walking, jogging or riding bicycles through the Park.

In May Shelley Mott replaced Tammy Bolick as the ranger in charge of the bathhouse area. Shelley comes to Fort Macon from Lake Waccamaw State Park and has been doing an outstanding job. In June Kevin Golden replaced Dennis Jones as Maintenance Mechanic I at Fort Macon. Kevin is from Bettie. He loves this area and has been a pleasure to work with.

The support and the work of the Friends of Fort Macon helped the Park get almost \$300,000 more from the bond money than what we were scheduled for. There is a lot more work needed on the Fort, and I look forward to working with everyone in trying to get this work completed. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work. *The future for the Fort looks bright!*