

FORT MACON RAMPARTS

A newsletter of the Friends of Fort Macon Spring 1998

Volume V, Issue 1

The Confederate Seizure of Fort Macon

by Paul Branch

The question is often asked how Confederate soldiers were able to take over a US Government fort such as Fort Macon at the beginning of the Civil War, requiring Union forces to recapture the fort from the Confederates in 1862 by siege and bombardment. So how did the Confederates initially take it in 1861? The answer is frequently one of the parts of the Fort Macon's history that is overlooked.

As historical events were about to unfold in 1861 into one of the bloodiest wars in American history, Congressional economizing of the previous decade dictated that Fort Macon and most of her sister forts along the US Coast were not manned by costly garrisons of soldiers, but by military caretakers. (Yes, Congressional cutbacks of the military also existed back then.) The caretakers were usually older soldiers holding the rank of Ordnance Sergeants. Ordnance Sergeants were noncommissioned soldiers of long standing in the military who were specially appointed to this rank in recognition of their many years of faithful military service. They were stationed at forts to look after them and care for the fort's weaponry.

William Alexander was assigned to Fort Macon in April 1859 as Ordnance Sergeant. At the time, he was 50 years of age. He had been born in Greenock, Scotland and immigrated to the United States as a young man. Alexander's full career in the US Army began when he enlisted in the 6th US Infantry on June 29, 1831. His service in the Mexican War left him suffering from chronic rheumatism as direct results of exposure and other hardships of the campaign. He arrived with his young wife of six months in April 1861, having previously married Ann L. Livesay, age 21, of Morehead City. They were living quietly at Fort Macon when National events over took them and ended forever their period of quiet and tranquility.

The election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency in November 1860 was followed in December by the secession of South Carolina from the Union. Other states seceded in the months that followed. Secession fever also surfaced in North Carolina when in January 1861 local secessionist militia troops made an unauthorized seizure of Forts Caswell and Johnston

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SON OF FORT MACON SOLDIER INVENTS FLYING MACHINE

by Grayden Paul Jr.

Private Raymond L. Paul was one of the Confederate soldiers taken prisoner when Federal Forces recaptured Fort Macon in 1862. Soon, Paul and most of the other prisoners were paroled. Paul returned to his home in Davis Shore, a small fishing hamlet on Core Sound, about 20 miles north-east of Fort Macon. In civilian life, Paul became a master carpenter and blacksmith. With his brother, Ammie, they built several of the early Rod and Gun clubs on the Outer Banks. Raymond's famous son was William Luther Paul, who was born in 1869. Luther Paul and his extraordinary inventiveness are described below.

As a boy, Luther was fascinated with the inner secrets of how machines worked. By his teenage years, he became known as the local "Mr. Fix it." In 1904, he patented a gasoline engine of his own design, and by 1906, he had constructed a side-wheeler showboat on which to present lantern slide shows to the numerous down-east coastal communities. The slide shows were later replaced with silent motion pictures. In 1911, Luther moved to Beaufort with his

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*Don't forget the Ice Cream Social
April 19th - See Page 7*

at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in the belief that North Carolina should also leave the Union. This did not happen and the troops soon had to return the forts to their ordnance sergeants while a greatly embarrassed Governor John W. Ellis apologized to the US Government.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Alexander was grateful that there had been no similar trouble at "his" fort. Forts Caswell, Johnson, and Macon, and the US Arsenal at Fayetteville were the four major US military installations in the state. However, as the weeks passed with one Southern State after another leaving the Union, there was no doubt that the nation was on the verge of a serious crisis that could involve Fort Macon. Throughout North Carolina, the populace was now divided on the issue of whether to remain in the Union or join the other seceded states that formed the Confederacy. Newspapers editorialized; speeches were made; unionists and secessionists held meetings; a Southern Rights Party was formed by secessionists, and public excitement was soaring. The more public favor the secessionists gained, the more likely Sergeant Alexander, as sole military person at Fort Macon, which was one of the four major US installations in the state, could expect some kind of trouble. By the beginning of April 1861, he probably had begun to feel concern for his safety and that of his wife. In a letter to the Chief of Ordnance, Col. H. K. Craig, in Washington on April 2, 1861, he requested that a revolver be issued to him. Col. Craig replied on April 12 that there were no revolvers on hand. That very same day, the Confederate forces started the Civil War by opening fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.

On April 13, the day the US garrison at Fort Sumter surrendered to the Confederate forces, a group of 17 Carteret County secessionists formed a militia company called the "Beaufort Harbor Guards" with one Josiah S. Pender as their captain. Pender was a wealthy 42-year old local entrepreneur who owned a steamship company and the Atlantic Hotel in Beaufort. He was an ardent secessionist. Only the day before, Pender had helped organize the local chapter of the Southern Rights Party for Carteret County, and was appointed corresponding secretary of the new party. For Pender and his followers, the news that came "crackling" over the telegraph wires about the attack on Fort Sumter brought with it a moment of truth. The war had begun and in a short time Federal troops would be sent into the South to fight the Confederates. Then, North Carolina would have to decide whether to join the Confederacy or fight the Confederacy. Either way, Federal troops would seek to garrison the forts on the North Carolina coast. At this point, there was no way to know if Governor Ellis and the General Assembly would decide to secede and join the Confederacy or not. Even if they took that serious step, would the Governor have enough time to rush state troops to seize the three forts and the arsenal before the Federal troops arrived and occupied them?

Captain Pender decided he could not take the chance Fort Macon might be occupied by Federal troops before the state could seize it. Without notifying the Governor or waiting for authority, he decided he would seize Fort Macon himself. Accordingly, he set out to round up any volunteers, concerned citizens and interested parties he could find

Financial Results Summary for 1997

INCOME

Member Dues	\$10,095
Gifts & Grants	13,110
Fort Donation Box	6,510
Bank Interest	303
Bookstore	273
Other	41
TOTAL INCOME	\$30,332

EXPENDITURES

Membership support	
Printing & Postage	\$3,890
Office Operations	390
Computer Operations	951
Meetings, events, etc.	962
Fort Exhibits	10,289
Support Park Operations	5,301
Other	444
TOT. EXPEND.	\$22,232

NET INCOME **\$8,100**

BANK BALANCE

JANUARY 1	\$28,104
DECEMBER 31	36,204
INCREASE	8,100

COMMENT: Friends of Fort Macon policy precludes borrowing of funds. Therefore, before a major project is undertaken, funds must be accumulated. Often, money is raised in the year before it is expended. It is anticipated that most of the money on hand at the end of 1997 will be spent on major projects in 1998.

In 1997, The Friends were the recipients of very generous donations from the Atlantic Beach Merchants and Professional Association, Carolina Power (CP&L), and the Carteret County Commissioners.

to join his company in taking the fort the following day. Thus, Sergeant Alexander's worst fears were about to become a reality.

On the fateful day of April 14, 1861, Sergeant Alexander, as it turned out, was not unaware of what was about to happen. He had learned "from reliable sources" that Pender's company planned to seize the fort. Completely perplexed, Alexander at once mailed off a letter to Chief of Ordnance Craig in Washington. In the letter he reported; "[I] am at a loss how to act, in premises, what to do, or where to go. I have served the US Army for the last thirty years, and am now no longer fit for any active service, have my family at the Post, and all of my property. The latter I expect to lose—having no where to move it—and cannot at this time convert anything into money."

Resistance to Pender's men, of course, would have been futile for Alexander. He was alone, except for his wife, was in poor physical condition, and much too old for this kind of stress. Even if he felt compelled to resist, Fort Macon actually offered him little help. The fort was in a dilapidated condition with only four heavy guns mounted on weak rotating carriages. A few field pieces were on hand, but they were impractical to use in his defense. Alexander had no personal weapons. He and his wife were completely at the mercy of the situation.

By early in the afternoon of the 14th, while Alexander pondered his dilemma and awaited his fate, Captain Pender was ready to make his

move. He succeeded in assembling a total of 54 men including his own company, citizens from Beaufort, and Morehead City, and a group of cadets from the A. M. Institute in Carolina City. Exactly at 3 P.M., a steamer arrived at the fort's wharf and landed Pender's men. They made their way to the fort and found the entrance clear. They went in-



Josiah Pender

Photo: UNC Library, Chapel Hill

side and Sergeant Alexander received them courteously.

The entire conversation that followed was punctuated with the utmost kindness, courtesy, and respect on both sides. Pender stated his men were seizing the fort for the State of North Carolina. Alexander replied that he regretted the necessity Pender and his men felt themselves under. He stated that he himself was a native-born Scotsman, and that after 30 years of military service at

various places, he had no sectional feeling for any one part of the Union. He requested that Pender sign receipts for the US property at the fort and Pender refused. Alexander had no choice but to submit to the situation, which he did. This was all over within less than 30 minutes after Pender's men landed. Thus, Fort Macon was seized without bloodshed. Captain Pender jubilantly telegraphed news of the takeover to South Carolina Governor Francis Pickens, closing with the remark: "We intend that North Carolina shall occupy a true instead of a false position, though it be done by revolution." Perhaps, because of the uncertainty of how his actions would be viewed, however, Pender did not telegraph North Carolina Governor Ellis.

Once the fort was in Pender's hands, many of the citizens returned to their homes, leaving only the handful of men from the Beaufort Harbor Guards. Alexander and his wife were still at the fort and began packing their belongs in preparation for their departure. Still concerned about receipts for the US property, Alexander wrote a note to Pender. Pender refused again in a note that was given to Alexander the next day.

Events now took a dramatic leap. On April 15, as expected, President Lincoln issues a call to the states for 75,000 troops to quell the rebellion by the Southern States. North Carolina's Governor Ellis was requested to furnish two regiments as the state's portion of this total, but he refused. Throughout the state,

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the call for troops was the event that turned the tide in favor of secession. Most North Carolinians believed they would rather join in fighting an invasion of the South by Federal troops than fight their sister Southern States. Immediately, Governor Ellis ordered state troops to seize the four Federal installations in the state. Unaware that Fort Macon had been taken by Pender, Ellis ordered the Goldsboro Rifles under Captain M. C. Craton to take Fort Macon.

The Goldsboro troops arrived at Fort Macon on the morning of April 16, and Captain Craton assumed command. On April 17, more troops arrived as well as a schooner carrying an engineering work force of free Negroes and slaves from New Bern to prepare the fort for war. After the schooner was unloaded, Sergeant Alexander and his wife, with their belongings, were transported to Beaufort. Soon Alexander received instructions from Chef of Ordnance Craig to remain in Beaufort to await further orders.

This was how the Confederates seized Fort Macon. From this point, the lives of the two principal parties, Captain Pender and Sergeant Alexander, took quite different paths. After taking Fort Macon, Pender and his followers were quickly edged out of the picture by the arrival of numerous companies of state troops and volunteers to occupy the fort for war. There is evidence to indicate that Pender was angered at being usurped in command and shoved into the background, and also that he considered seizing a shipment of cannons for the fort to start a battery on Shackleford Banks. However, this never happened. The Beaufort Harbor Guards were eventually recruited into a full-strength company

and formally accepted into state service in May 1861. Pender and the company were on duty at Fort Macon and Bogue Banks for the remainder of the year.

Unfortunately, the remainder of Pender's life was a series of ups and downs. Pender's disdain for authority and his penchant to do as he pleased led to his court martial for being absent from his command under false pretenses and resulted in his dismissal from service in December 1861. About this time, his wife died in Beaufort. Undaunted, he threw his energies into his steamship business and continued to serve the Confederacy as a blockade runner. He remarried in September 1862, but suffered another personal loss a month later. His oldest son, serving as a 1st Lieutenant in the Beaufort Harbor Guards, was accidentally killed by a gunshot while horse playing with a fellow soldier. Pender continued to run his steamship business until he contracted yellow fever and died at age 45 on October 25, 1864. He is buried with his first wife in the Old Burying Ground in Beaufort.

The life of Ordnance Sergeant Alexander was far less complicated than that of Pender. He and his wife took residence in Beaufort after leaving Fort Macon and dutifully awaited further orders. Because of the active war in progress, these orders never came. Alexander was in an awkward position as one of very few US soldier in a town of largely Confederate sympathizers. However, other than occasional "flings and jeers", he was not bothered. When Federal troops captured Beaufort in March 1862, Alexander went to the headquarters of the Federal commander, Major John Allen and reported himself for duty. Subsequently, he participated in opera-

tions against the fort and was reinstated as its Ordnance Sergeant following its capture. In April 1864, Alexander was discharged from the Army at the end of his enlistment and thereafter continued to reside in Beaufort. In 1868, he purchased the house at 118 Moore Street that bears his name and lived there with his wife for the remaining 19 years of his life. During this time, he was very active as a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and served on its vestry and also as senior warden. He died July 29, 1887 at the age of 76. He is buried in St. Paul's Church Cemetery.

Paul Branch, the author, is the Ranger Historian at Fort Macon State Park.

THE COMPUTER CORNER

During 1997, an impressive Web page has been created for the Internet which describes, with photos and drawings, the historic features of Fort Macon. Also on this site, you can find all of the historic articles which have been written for the Ramparts during the past four years, plus a description of the Friends organization. The name of this page is Fort Macon Ramparts (see: <http://www.clis.com/friends>).

The creator of this Web site is Bob Donnan, the chairman of our Computer Operations Committee. Bob also uses his desktop publishing software to compose this newsletter. If you have a computer and would like to work with Bob on Friends projects, please call Bob at 728-5495.



Do not regret growing older. It is a privilege denied to many.

- Anonymous



Continued from page 1

wife and five children. He built the town's first movie house, "The Seabreeze Theatre," complete with heating and cooling systems. He included for the entertainment of his guests a 14 record audio system that was synchronized with the motion pictures. He also established a blacksmith/machine shop and a garage. In 1914, he built one of Carteret County's earliest automobiles. In the 1920's, he corresponded with Thomas Alva Edison about his idea of putting sound on film, but Edison responded that he

efficiency of various wing shapes and these had great influence on later experimenters. Another early pioneer in fixed-wing flight was Dr. Samuel P. Langley, the third Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Although Langley's 1903 attempts with his tandem-wing aircraft were unsuccessful, he too contributed to the fund of knowledge available to other pioneers, including Luther Paul.

Luther Paul designed and built what may be described as an experimental helicopter. Paul's machine, dubbed the "Bumble Bee," was



Luther Paul's Horseless Carriage

was too busy working on his own concepts.

Prior to 1903, the challenge of flight was capturing the attention of the world press. A reward was offered by a New York newspaper for the first manned power flight. Luther's interest in aviation increased when he learned of this reward.

Germany's Otto Lillienthal made several important contributions to the theory of flight. Between 1891 and 1896, Lillienthal made over 2,000 glider flights. Much of Lillienthal's research was into the

tested in 1903 in an open-ended barn that functioned somewhat as a wind tunnel. According to Luther's notes and statements by family members, the Bumble Bee was eventually able to lift off the ground about five feet carrying 60 pounds of ballast. In addition to the ballast, the flying machine weighed approximately 500 pounds. Luther designed and built an engine to power his Bumble Bee using parts from several motorcycle engines. The photograph below is of a model of the Bumble Bee constructed by Grayden Paul, Jr., the grandson of Luther Paul, and is

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Board Members serve without compensation for a one year term beginning January 1.

The wages of sin are death, but after taxes are taken out, it's just a tired feeling.

- Paula Poundstone

Friends of Friends Make Generous Donations

The Friends of Fort Macon acknowledge with appreciation the following major contributors to our projects:

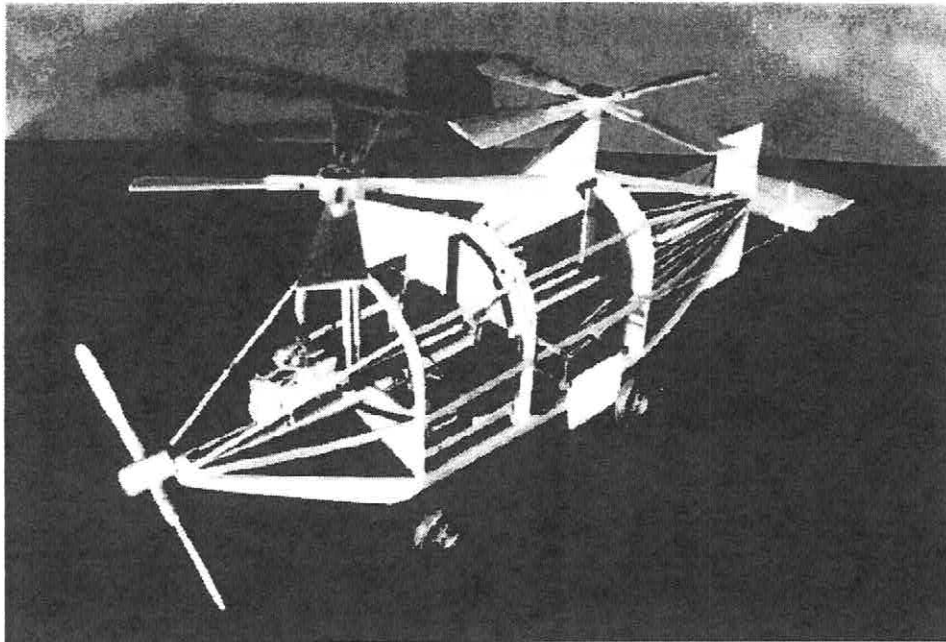
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Because of friends like these we can continue to support the Fort.

based on sketches and notes by the inventor.

Several of the features of the Bumble Bee were years ahead of other aviation pioneers at the time. The Bumble Bee had a single engine connected to two rotors for lift and a reversible propeller for forward or backward motion. In Luther's own words, "While going up, the side rudders are used to guide it. These rudders are operated by extensions that contact the shoulders

Carolina. On learning of the Wright brother's achievement, Thomas A. Edison commented that no aircraft could be considered truly practical until it could rise from the ground and settle back again "vertically." Edison's comments gave Luther Paul incentive to continue his work on the Bumble Bee, which had the potential for becoming the first craft in history to be capable of vertical flight. Unfortunately, without the aerodynamic lift provided by large



Model of Luther Paul's Bumble Bee (Photo:Diane Hardy)

of the operator. A dip or tip is corrected by the horizontal rudder which is connected by extensions to the steering wheel and is pushed forward or back as the case may be. Changing course is simply by turning the wheel the direction you want to go." A watertight bottom and steerable front wheels permitted use on both land and water. Luther Paul was convinced his machine would fly with a pilot on board if he had a more powerful engine than 12-20 horsepower ones then available.

On December 17, 1904, the Wright brothers were able to achieve a powered and controlled 12-second flight at Kitty Hawk, North

Carolina. On learning of the Wright brother's achievement, Thomas A. Edison commented that no aircraft could be considered truly practical until it could rise from the ground and settle back again "vertically." Edison's comments gave Luther Paul incentive to continue his work on the Bumble Bee, which had the potential for becoming the first craft in history to be capable of vertical flight. Unfortunately, without the aerodynamic lift provided by large

The author, Grayden Paul, Jr. is the grandson of Luther Paul. Grayden is an aeronautical engineer, and serves on the Board of the Friends of Fort Macon. His model of the Bumble Bee is now on display at the Beaufort Historical Association.



Plans Proceeding on New Exhibit Projects

David Pleace, the chairman of our Artifacts Committee, has put the finishing touches on the hot shot furnace. This winter he installed lead sheathing on the roof of the furnace. Our hot shot furnace is probably the only one in North America that is complete in every historic detail!

The Park maintenance staff has built and installed a replica of the original massive door to the powder magazine. They have also constructed a large display case in which several of the original 1834 magazine doors are displayed. These 164 year old doors are now quite fragile, and must be exhibited in a protective environment. The Friends of Fort Macon were pleased to be able to provide the necessary funding for this work.

With a little luck, and a lot of hard work, 1998 may see two new exhibits in place at the Fort. We hope to be able to replace the original 1834 bake oven and kitchen range. These brick structures provided food for hundreds of Confederate and Federal soldiers. The plans are ready. All we need is money and a brick mason. We are working on it.

EUREKA! Fort Repairs To Begin This Year!

Thanks mainly to the efforts of our longtime supporter, State Senator Beverly Perdue, the Legislature has allocated \$2 million from the Repairs and Renovations fund to begin the huge job of repairing the damage of the decades. Also allocated to this work is \$750,000 of proceeds from the 1994 bond referendum.

Although these funds are only sufficient to complete a small fraction of all that needs to be done, it does represent a major breakthrough for Fort Macon and for the Friends. We will stay in close contact with our legislators, and with the Parks Division in Raleigh in order to ensure that the funds don't dry up before the job is done.

Jody Merritt, our Fort Macon Superintendent, tells us that engineers have been measuring, probing, and planning preliminary to the start of work. Jody expects that the actual repair work will begin in late summer or early fall. We will keep you posted.

Another Milestone! Lifetime Members Top 100!

In January, loyal member Tibbie Roberts became the 100th Lifetime Member of the Friends of Fort Macon. She became the 100th person who does not have to wonder if she/he remembered to renew their membership at the end of each year. Our growing list of Lifetime members gives us a solid membership base upon which we can continue

to influence the legislators and administrators in Raleigh to restore and preserve Fort Macon.

Wouldn't it be great if we could have 200 Lifetime Members by the end of 1998? If you haven't already taken that step, please consider it. If you are able to itemize your tax deductions, the cost to you of a \$100 Lifetime Membership will be considerably reduced. Besides, it will make you feel so good.

Membership Form

Check One: ☐ New Member(s) ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift Membership

Fee Enclosed \$ _____ Date: _____

Member's Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of Donor, if gift _____

Membership Categories and Fees

Individual - \$5.00 Family - \$10.00 Lifetime (ea.) - \$100.00

Business or Organization - \$25.00 Business Lifetime - \$500.00

Friends of Fort Macon, P.O.Box 651, Beaufort, NC 28516-0651

Mark Your Calendar For the Ice Cream Social

On Sunday, April 19, we will be observing the 136th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Macon with our annual membership meeting and ice cream social at the Fort.

If you are still capable of having a good time, this will be the place to do it! The whole event will be dedicated to entertaining you. There will be all the ice cream and brownies you can eat, good music, demonstrations by Park Rangers in historic costume, and who knows what else. If you haven't been out to the Fort within the last month, come see the new exhibits that we have created. We think you will be impressed.

The meeting will begin at 2:00 in the afternoon inside the Fort. We will have a large tent, so don't worry about the weather. If needed, there will be overflow parking, with shuttle service, at the Coast Guard station.

So come on out on April 19, and bring some friends. For the small price of a membership, they too can have a great time. See you there!