

FORT MACON RAMPARTS

A newsletter of the Friends of Fort Macon Summer 1998

Volume V, Issue 2

Soldier, Planter, Judge

by Gene Dugan

Professor R. H. Graves, Headmaster of Belmont Select School, predicted "Attending a military academy will ruin the boy academically." This was his judgment on Walter McKenzie Clark when the boy was about to enter Hillsboro Military Academy. Throughout his schooling, Young Clark had earned both the highest grades and the highest commendation.

The boy had always been mature beyond his years and it was no surprise that when war broke out in 1861 that he would become an officer. With the influx of

ordered to join Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. They went into Maryland with Stonewall Jackson and made quick work of the garrison at Harper's Ferry and then went double quick to Sharpsburg (Antietam) in time to rescue Lee's army.

Walter Clark was wounded at



Antietam Battle-field - The Day After

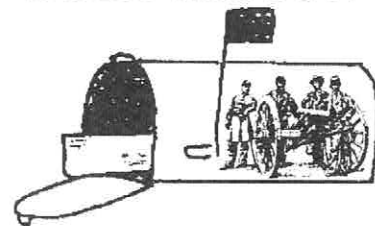
totally untrained and mostly uneducated men and boys into the Confederate service, experienced drill masters were needed. Colonel Tew, headmaster at Hillsboro, was asked to provide men trained in drilling soldiers. His first selection was Cadet Clark. At fourteen, Walter Clark became drillmaster and lieutenant in the 22nd North Carolina Infantry.

He stayed with the 22nd until November, 1861, when he resigned to join the 35th North Carolina Infantry. In November 1862, the 35th was

Antietam. Two different accounts have been recorded of this action. This was Clark's first action and he thought it his duty to set an example by staying on his horse. He said a "kind hearted veteran" got him off his horse. As he was dismounting a minie ball creased his hand. General Ransom recalled the incident somewhat differently. He said that a big mountaineer private ran up and jerked Clark from the saddle, yelling, "Git offen this horse, ye danged little fool. Ye'll git kilt!"

Continued on page 3

A LETTER FROM FORT MACON



Following is the first of a series of letters written by Jane Augusta McKinney Coues, known as "Jeannie" to her friends and family. Jeannie was the wife of Dr. Elliott Coues (pronounced "cows"), the Fort Macon surgeon, and a renowned naturalist.

Jeannie accompanied Captain Coues when he was assigned to Fort Macon in February, 1869. Initially, their living quarters were inside one of the Fort casemates. During their 20 months stay at Fort Macon, Jeannie corresponded frequently with her sister Louise. More of her letters will be printed in forthcoming issues of the Fort Macon Ramparts.



Fort Macon, North Carolina
March 13th, 1869

My dear Sister:

I have been thinking of writing you for ever so long, but have been waiting till I felt like it. We came here the 14th or 15th of Feb. I suppose this is as pleasant as most forts

Continued on page 2

and I ought to like it for my life in all probability will be spent in just such places - but I don't. I might like it better perhaps if I had any ladies society. There is only one here beside myself. She is very nice and pleasant but I don't feel drawn to her. Though we occupy adjoining rooms I never see her except at meals or walking about the fort.

When we first came there was one lovely lady here - daughter of a celebrated Boston scientific gentleman and niece of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Her family is very intimate with some of Elliott's people and she had frequently heard of Elliott both as a surgeon and naturalist, so that on our arrival we were at once admitted within the pale. One week ago her husband's regiment was ordered to Savannah and some new troops stationed here, which we don't begin to like as well. Just as sure as I get to caring for anyone they are ordered away, so that I feel now that I don't want to know anyone again.

I don't know how to describe Fort Macon so that you will get my idea of it. It is built on a little island two miles out from the mainland. It is in the form of a hollow pentagon, and has a moat and a drawbridge. On the ramparts are cannons commanding the harbor and ocean called guns en barbette. The fort is turfed over and from the water looks only like high breast works, but in reality it is 40 ft. high. The entrance is called the sally-port and there is a guard of 10 or 15 men stationed there night and day. No one enters without being challenged. That is, no one living outside the fort.

Whenever the officer of the day goes in or out of the fort, a sentinel calls out in a stentorian voice: "Commanding Officer! Turn out the guard!" on which the guard fall into line and salute the officer as he passes. Or maybe he doesn't want to be bothered with so much ceremony, in which case he calls out to the sentinel: "Never mind the guard." All day and all night long the sentinel with his horrid voice is either saying: "Commanding Officer, Turn out the guard," or else: "Who goes there. Halt!" Every sunset and sunrise the cannon over my casemate is fired, and every day when the time comes I get so nervous expecting it that I feel as though I should fly.

I go over to Beaufort nearly every day in a rowboat to market. The officers all "mess" together. We have eight servants. The cook is splendid. Oysters are only 30 cents a bushel and almost everything else is cheap. We might save a good deal of money here for there is nothing to spend it on, but Elliott's pay isn't nearly as much here. It isn't cut down, but the reduction comes in this way. In Columbia there were no government quarters and officers were allowed a certain sum per month according to their rank to rent quarters. Elliott's allowance was \$54 a month, but as we boarded we had no rent to pay so we had the \$54 for other purposes. Here, as government furnishes quarters we don't get that.

It is very healthy here and nice places for Edith to play. Warm days she is taken down to the beach and there she rolls over and over, fills her eyes and hair full of sand and makes little mud pies, though she hasn't at-

tained too much proficiency in the latter. Everything is so clean on the beach that I like to have her there. The sea comes up twice a day and washes away all impurities.

I have some coarse, unbleached linen, something like Holland, that would make Alice two capital everyday aprons. Send me a good pattern and I will make them. Love to the bairns and to Mother and Mr. Dean.

With much love,

Jeannie

We are deeply indebted to Mr. David Dean, of Rochester, New York, who has graciously allowed us to publish these letters from his private collection. David Dean is descended from Jeannie's sister Louise.



"When I was a boy I was told that anybody could be president; I'm beginning to believe it."

Clarence Darrow



GRANT US OUR DAILY BREAD

The FRIENDS have received a grant of \$5,000 from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, for the purpose of rebuilding the original 1834 bake oven. This generous grant assures us that we will have sufficient resources to proceed with the work. Our thanks go out to Secretary McCain and Director Crow for giving us this vote of confidence. The Friends have been negotiating with a team of Historic Restoration Specialists who are qualified to do this work for us. We will keep you posted.

When the regiment returned to Virginia in February 1863, he resigned, according to the records, "by reason of his father's health." He was concerned by his father's desire to become a general of militia. Walter advised him to forget it since he would "not be able to survive the hardships of army life." After resigning, Walter entered the University of North Carolina and got his degree in law. He had prepared for this all during the campaigns with the 35th, having carried his books with him. Some said that he fought the Yankees in the daytime and Greek and Latin at night.

He wrote to his mother, June 3, 1864, "Yesterday I received my degree. Today I was elected major in the 5th Battalion, Junior Reserves." The Junior Reserves were a result of the Confederacy's growing shortage of replacements for their combat losses.

Shortly after the organization of the 1st Junior Reserves (70th N. C.), General Theophilus Holmes moved his headquarters to Weldon, North Carolina. Walter was in charge of drilling and training and he was a hard taskmaster. During operations along the Roanoke, he was in command of the outposts and his orders were specific as to the punishment for any officer or man who did not perform as required. He never asked for more than he himself had given.

As Sherman entered North Carolina, the Junior Reserves joined General Joe Johnston's western army. As Johnston made a last ditch effort to slow Sherman at Bentonville, Walter commanded the skirmishers on the right flank. Sherman's veterans, finding only kids in their way, mounted a series of attacks that were all beaten off. Walter wrote to his mother that they had given the Yankees a "real Indian fight."

After Johnston's surrender on April 26, 1865, Walter arrived home to find total ruin; his father's health and fortune gone, and his home burned. Late in the war, his father had given Walter a large plantation near New Bern, North Carolina. He now took on the task of rebuilding both his and his father's estate. He rebuilt the destroyed houses and barns, bought live stock, hired a labor force, and made connections with merchants in Norfolk and Baltimore. Walter Clark recognized a new postwar order, and demanded a change of attitude in the South's leaders.



The members of the Junior Reserves were only 13 to 17 years of age. They weren't drummer boys, but were combat soldiers, trained to kill or be killed.



He advocated industrial independence from the North. He urged the people of the South to forget the past and get to work. That included improving and supporting education since, "The cause of learning is the cause of civilization."

In 1866, he went North to see how the Yankees did it, and studied law and business. When he returned to North Carolina with additional degrees, he found he could still not practice law because he was not yet 21.

He first hung out his shingle in Scotland Neck, but soon moved to Halifax, North Carolina. He passed his bar exams and became a very successful attorney. After moving to Raleigh, he was swept swiftly into politics. His name became known throughout the

state. He made friends easily and just as easily made enemies. Much of his thinking was well ahead of the times. He embraced Socialism, and advocated women's rights.

Clark was a prolific writer, not only letters to the editor, but many magazine and newspaper articles and a number of books. To get his message across, in partnership with Thomas M. Holt (later to become governor), he bought a newspaper. He was also a partner in a couple of railroads. He was elected a committee of one by the United Confederate Veterans to publish the records of North Carolina troops. This resulted in the five volume set of "Histories of North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865", published in 1901. He personally edited every entry and wrote a few himself.

He married Susan Washington Graham in 1874 and they had eight children. Although encouraged to run for office on many occasions, Clark kept his eye on his goal, the State Supreme Court, which he ultimately attained. Contrary to Professor Graves admonition, military training and life gave Walter Clark the background to fulfill his goal and become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

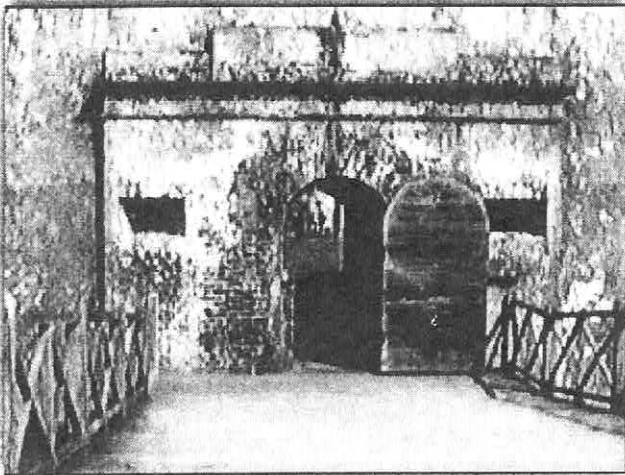
All his life, he drove himself to excel and he expected no less from others. His army experience and being a major in the Junior Reserves had prepared him for life to the fullest. The youngest major in the Confederate forces passed away in May 1924, exactly three months before his seventy eighth birthday.

The author, Gene Dugan, frequently writes articles about the history of North Carolina and Carteret County. He has contributed articles to Our State magazine. Gene has been a long-time member of the Friends of Fort Macon.

FORT MACON

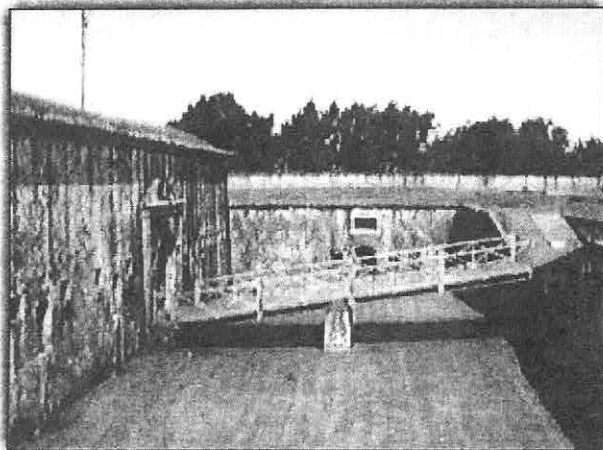
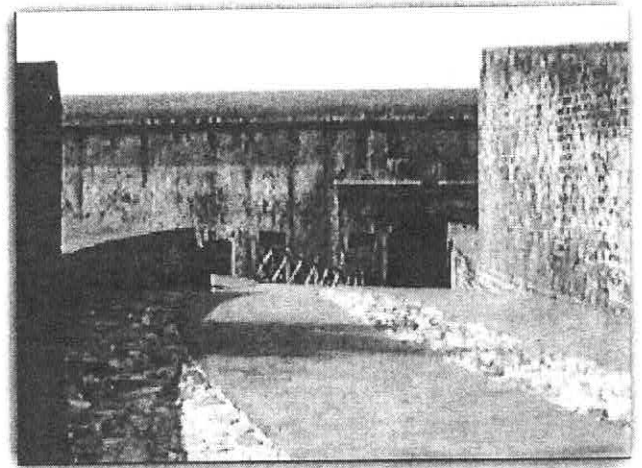
“A place to capture a Young Boy’s Imagination”

Photographs and Memories by Bill Gibson II

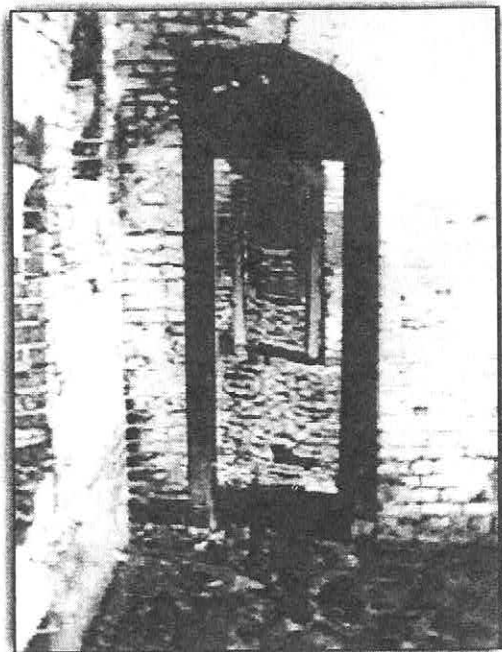


Entering the Fort meant an uphill climb from the parking area at the base of the dunes. I guess this was the first cobble stone path that I walked upon (Colonial Williamsburg being the second). The path was cut through scrub brush and Water Oaks that are common to North Carolina beaches.

There were three things that captured my imagination while growing up in rural North Carolina in the sixties... Knights of the Round Table, King Arthur and Ivanhoe...Secondly, were World War I bi-planes, Eddie Rickenbacker, Baron Von Richtofen, and the Blue Max...Finally, the Civil War, the Monitor & the Merrimac, General Robert E. Lee and Fort Macon. Of all these things, Fort Macon was the only one that was easily accessible. My mother and I would visit the fort several times a year.

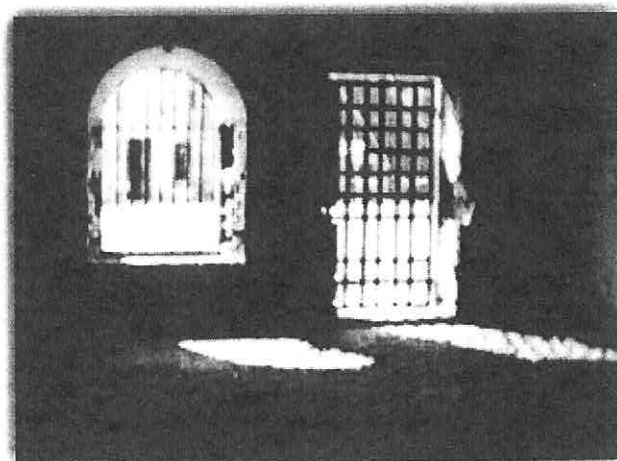


Without the bridge it would be almost impossible to storm the fort without being wounded or killed. Looking past the bridge from this picture you can see down into the moat. This is one of those “dark” areas of the fort that kids loved to visit. More than one entrance leads into the Fort from its outer perimeter. From just inside the door you can turn in either direction and walk from room to room.

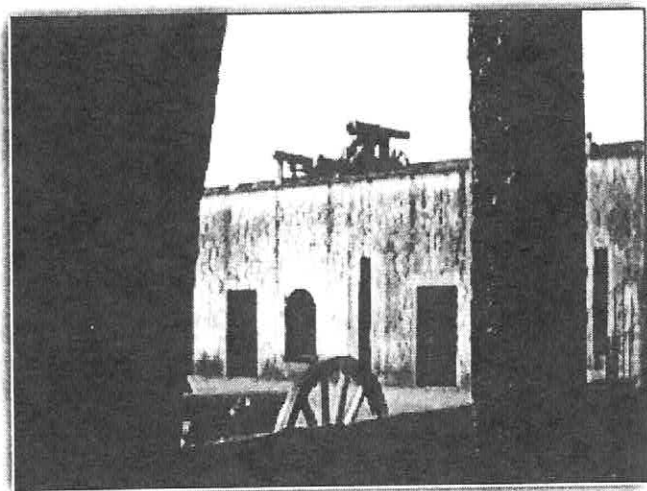


*Both fun and dangerous
were the paths from room to room.
No smooth Twentieth Century sidewalks here.
Some bricks were missing...
others broken off...
and you were never sure of what you
might find through the next door
or especially when you entered
a room that was pitch black.*

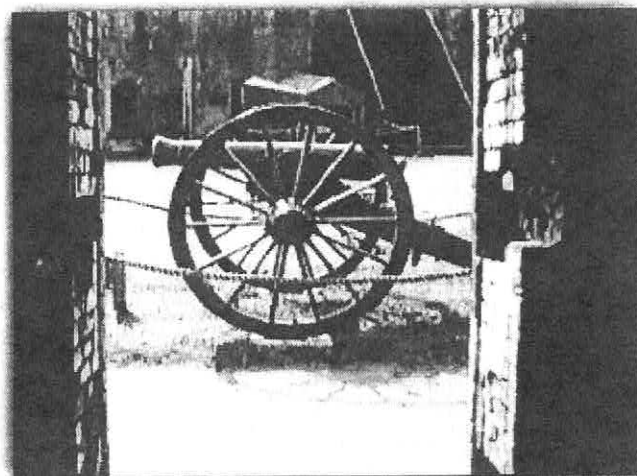
*You could be **trapped**
with no way out.
Left possibly to starve to death...
to fall victim to the heat of the summer,
or shiver to death in a dank,
dark dungeon in winter.*

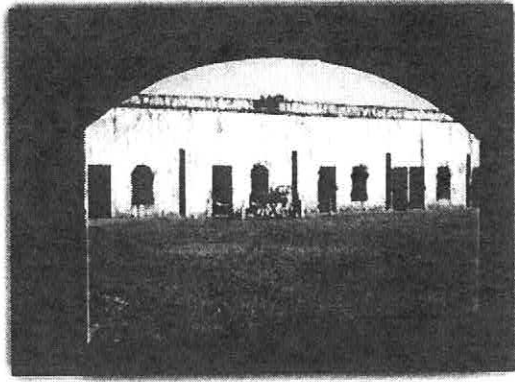


*Only Able to See
what your captors would
allow you to see from their
prison. looking through the
bars of a door or window at
the fort's armaments.*



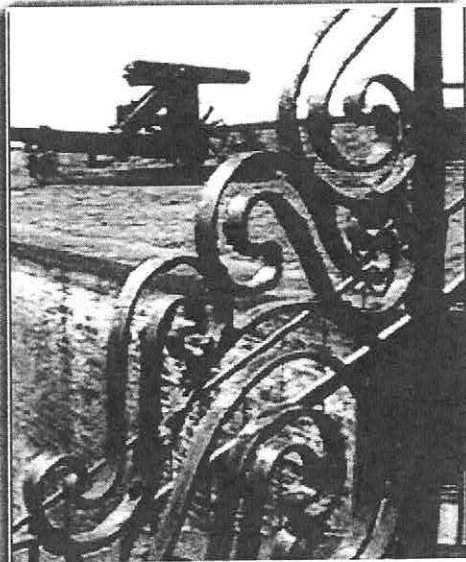
*But Wait...
you wear the "gray." You're in
the Confederate Army, and
this is still a Rebel fort.
"Ah, freedom!!!"*





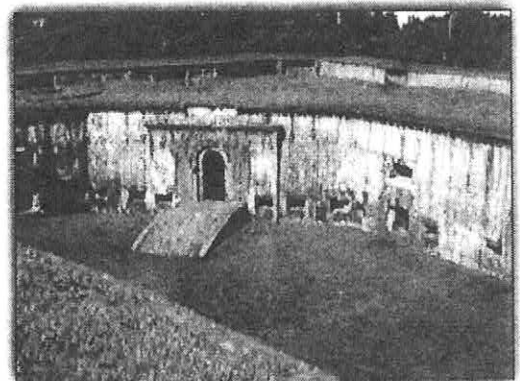
*You rush to the Courtyard
and spy one of the stairways to the
top of the fort. Let's climb up and
see what's there.*

*Intricate Grill Work
adorns the posts at the
top of the stairs.
There we see:*



*A 32 Pounder Cannon
pointed toward the inlet and
standing guard to protect us
from ships entering the port*

*Atop the fort you can
look back down upon the
courtyard and the
armament within*



ATTENTION BULL MARKET MILLIONAIRES!

Some of our members have had the vision, the courage and the good fortune to have had a long breathtaking ride in the stock market. If you are one of those, and if you are beginning to fear that the ride may be just about over, here is some food for thought.

The FRIENDS OF FORT MACON have several large projects in the planning stage that could provide exciting gifting opportunities for someone who can afford a charitable donation of \$20,000 or more. By giving the FRIENDS appreciated securities, you can avoid capital gains taxes while deducting the full market value as a charitable contribution.

The use of your contribution by the FRIENDS can be restricted according to your wishes. Every dollar given will be spent on the project of your choice. The result will be a permanent enhancement to Fort Macon that will bear your name in bronze as a fitting testament to your vision and your generosity. If you would like to discuss the possibility of such a gift, please call Bennett Moss at (252) 728-5256.

Cloud Bursts

*"If we do not succeed, we run
the risk of failure"*
Dan Quayle

*"Too much of a good thing
is wonderful"*
Mae West

*"If you look like your passport
photo, you're too ill to travel"*
Willkommen

THE COMPUTER CORNER

There are more than 1300 people on the membership rolls of the FRIENDS OF FORT MACON. Some are individual members, some are family members, some are Lifetime members, some are Business members, and a few are complimentary members. Most members are paid up for the current year only. Some are paid for one or two additional years. And, of course, there are those who are paid up for a lifetime. There are frequent mailings throughout the year that require the generation of mailing labels. Dues renewal notices are sent once a year to those who are not Lifetime members. Management reports are produced frequently to keep the President and Board of Directors informed of the current status of the Friends membership. Obviously, without a computer all of this work would require a small army of clerical workers to keep up with it. If you have a computer and would like to help, call Bennett at (252) 728-2526.

Superintendent's Message

Reviews, Reviews, Reviews
and more Reviews!!!

It finally looks like all of the reviews of the Fort Macon Restoration Project are complete. The project is scheduled to go out on bids this July with construction beginning sometime this Fall. This construction will be the beginning of many years of work on the Fort. The majority of this work will be the water-proofing of the casemates that were restored in the mid-1970's. The water-proofing of the casemates will require specialized work and should be interesting to watch. We hope to be able to utilize this work in our Fort Interpretive Programs.

The State Historic Preservation Office has given approval for the design and location of the Coastal Education/Visitor Center (CE/VC). This should be the last hurdle in getting the plans completed. We hope to have completed drawings of the CE/VC in hand by January of 1999. While things have been slow, they seem to finally be falling into place.

Jody Merritt

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