

FORT MACON RAMPARTS

A publication of the Friends of Fort Macon

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THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE ROOTS OF SOUTHERN SECESSION

by Bennett Moss

The author of the Declaration of Independence was passionately committed to the preservation of the American Union, but several of his actions and pronouncements helped create the climate that led to the secession of the southern states following Lincoln's election in 1860.

Jefferson served as Secretary of State in President Washington's first administration. The dominant member of the cabinet was Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton who, with Washington's support, structured the new nation with a highly centralized, powerful federal government. This was completely contrary to Jefferson's concept of a more decentralized government. After Washington's second term, John Adams succeeded to the presidency. He too was a Federalist who continued to support Hamilton's approach. Moreover, Adams appointed John Marshall as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. For 35 years, Marshall's court ruled in case after case that the state courts were inferior to the nation's Supreme Court.

Jefferson made no secret of his hostility to both Hamilton and Marshall. From the very beginning of Adams' presidency, Jefferson worked to build a constituency for his "Republican" philosophy. He described that philosophy in a letter written just three months before the election of 1800:

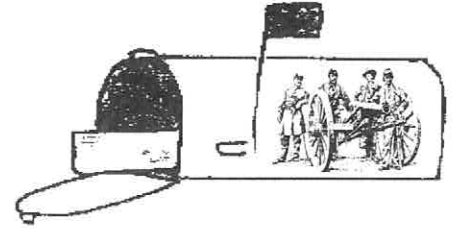
"Our country is too large to have

all its affairs directed by a single government. Public servants at such a distance, and from under the eye of their constituents, must from the circumstance of distance, be unable to administer and overlook all the details necessary for the good government of the citizens; and the same circumstance, by rendering detection impossible to their constituents, will invite the public agents to corruption, plunder and waste...

"The true theory of our constitution is surely the wisest and best, that the states are independent as to everything within themselves, and united as to everything respecting foreign nations. Let the general government be reduced to foreign concerns only, and let our affairs be disentangled from those of all other nations, except as to commerce, which the merchants will manage the better the more they are left free to manage for themselves, and our general government may be reduced to a very simple organization, and a very unexpensive one - a few plain duties to be performed by a few servants..."

During the Adams presidency, Congress had passed two acts, the "Alien" and "Sedition" acts, which proved so unpopular that they probably were responsible for Adams' failure in his bid for reelection. A few states felt that the two acts were in violation of the Constitution. In 1799,

LETTERS FROM FORT MACON



This is part of a series of letters written by soldiers stationed at Fort Macon. The writer of these letters, David Thompson, was a member of the 27th North Carolina Infantry, Company G (the Orange Guards) from Orange County, North Carolina. This unit arrived at Fort Macon in April 1861. It remained there until the following February when it was ordered to join in the defense of New Bern, North Carolina, against an expected attack by the Union forces of General Ambrose Burnside.

You will no doubt observe that not all soldiers were well educated and possessed of good literary skills. But this deficiency does not detract from our ability to appreciate the dangers and difficulties encountered by these nineteenth century soldiers.

Fort Macon June 19, 1861

Dear Mother

I arieved here night before last at 11 o'clock I started from Hillsborough at sun up arieved at Goldsboro at 10 o'clock A.M. I never started from thar till 4 in the evening when we took the Mail

Continued on page 3

Jefferson anonymously provided to the state of Kentucky, through his friend John Breckinridge, language which that state adopted for a resolution declaring that the federal government must not be the sole determiner of what is or is not constitutional. The resolution includes these words:

“...the several states who formed (the Constitution), being sovereign and independent, have the unquestionable right to judge of (an) infraction; and that a nullification by those sovereignties, of all unauthorized acts done under color of that instrument, is the rightful remedy”.

The Kentucky Resolution of 1799, using Jefferson's wording, asserts that each state is “sovereign and independent”, and has the right to declare a federal law to be unconstitutional, and therefore null and void within that sovereign state. The Kentucky resolution was instigated because of the despised Alien and Sedition Acts, and although that state asserted its right to nullify those acts, it chose not to exercise the right, but merely to register its solemn protest.

State Sovereignty, or “State's Rights” became the battle cry of the southern states for the next 65 years. In 1830, South Carolina again raised the issue of “nullification.” It became the occasion for the famous Webster-Hayne debates in the U.S. Senate.

Many of the economic and political differences between the original northern and southern states of the Union were products of geographic differences. There were many fine coastal harbors in the north, but only Charleston, in South Carolina, possessed an important seaport. During prehistoric ice ages, glaciers scoured the surface of what became New England, leaving a land that was generally unsuitable for large scale farming. However, the same glaciers did carve out large river valleys where water power would much later be available to drive large industrial mills.

These geographic differences produced an economy in the north which was driven by shipping, trade, industry, business, and small farms. South of the Mason and Dixon line, on the other hand, large expanses of fertile land, and long hot summers lent themselves to the development of sizable plantations requiring large quantities of low cost labor. In the early years of the Union, the principal source of revenue with which to operate the government came from import duties, or tariffs. These tariffs were designed to protect the

newly established industries of the North from competition from low cost imported manufactures. These tariffs were a continuing irritant to southern planters because they raised the cost of many of the goods which they needed to buy, but were not produced in the South.

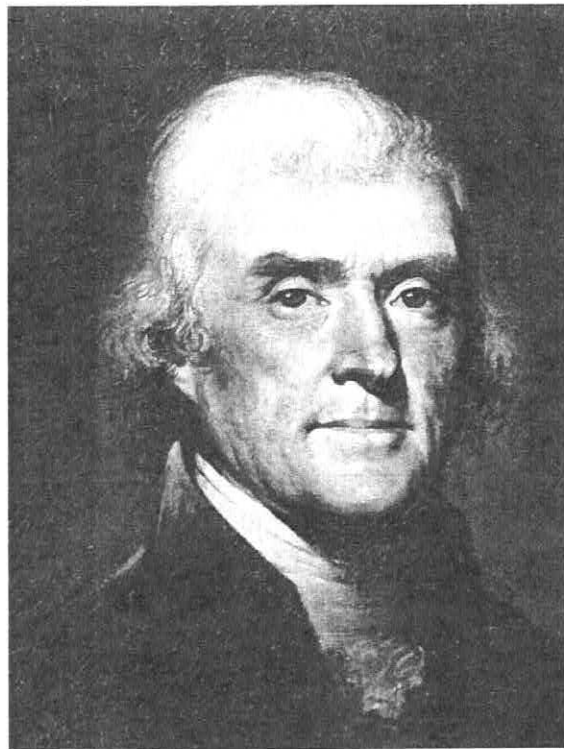
Four of the first five presidents of the Union were slave owning Virginia planters. Of these four, Jefferson was the founder of the Republican party opposed to a strong central government. Madison and Monroe were his disciples and neighbors. In his writings, Jefferson often projected himself as a believer in grass roots democracy. But when pressed for specifics, it became evident that he believed that to qualify as voters, and especially as office holders, one needed to be free, white, male, educated, and a land owner. Jefferson had long believed in the rule of property

owners and had scorned urban masses as “mobs of the great cities.” Jefferson's feelings on suffrage were generally shared throughout the southern states. Even though most of the soldiers who later fought for the Confederacy were not slave owners, most southern legislatures were dominated by the largest property owners who, of course, were also major slave owners.

The tenth amendment to the Constitution specifies that “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution ...are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Jefferson and his “strict construction” supporters, relying on this language, maintained that Congress had power to do

such things as the Constitution specifically authorized it to do, and no other. On the other hand, the Federalists led by Hamilton and Marshall relied on the clause in the Constitution which states that “The Congress shall have the power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution... all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States...” as authority for a wide ranging set of acts further strengthening the role of the central government. In spite of his strong convictions on this issue, President Jefferson violated his own principles when, in 1803, he asked Congress to approve the purchase of the Louisiana territory from France for fifteen million dollars.

From the time of the debate over the wording of the



Declaration of Independence, the subject of slavery had been a divisive issue between the North and the South. As years passed, slavery was outlawed in most of the northern states, and an abolitionist movement formed. Most southern leaders truly believed that their agrarian economy could not survive without slave labor. Fortunately for the South, there was usually a large enough number of senators from the slave states to forestall any congressional move to ban slavery. Thus the slavery issue did not seem to pose any threat to the continued existence of the Union in the early years of the nineteenth century.

But all of this changed with Jefferson's acquisition of the Louisiana Territory. Within twenty years of the purchase, the lure of cheap land brought so many settlers to the new lands that new territories were formed that began to clamor for statehood and admission to the Union. This would not appear to affect the status quo as long as at least half of these new states were admitted to the Union as slave states. This all came to a head in 1820 with the application for statehood of the Missouri territory. The House of Representatives, which was controlled by the more populous northern states, wanted Missouri admitted only as a free state. The debate in Congress became rancorous, and passions were aroused throughout the entire nation.

Thomas Jefferson, who was now in his 77th year, was badly shaken by these events. For the first time he sensed that his beloved Union was in danger of collapse. In a letter to Congressman Holmes, Jefferson wrote that the Missouri question "like a fire bell in the night had awakened him from repose and filled him with terror." To resolve the dispute, Congress finally adopted the Missouri Compromise whereby Missouri would be admitted as a slave state while Maine was admitted as a free state. But Jefferson recognized that "this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence."

The final sentence was handed down in 1860 when the candidate of the new Republican party won the presidential election. The platform of this party emphatically stated that no more new territories would be admitted to the Union as slave states. Thus, it would be only a matter of time before Congress would be dominated by the free states and be able to finally abolish slavery throughout the United States. Upon learning of the election results, seven of the southern states immediately seceded from the Union. They were soon joined by four more of the slave states.

Thomas Jefferson would have turned over in his grave if he thought that he had in any way contributed to the dissolution of the Union. But he was the original proponent of State Sovereignty and the right of nullification. These theories created a climate of mistrust and hostility between the southern states and the federal government. He was also

responsible for the Louisiana Purchase. Would disunion have occurred without these acts? Who can say? But you can rest easy TJ, your Union is now back together and stronger than ever.

The author of this article, Bennett Moss, is the editor of the Fort Macon Ramparts.

THOMAS JEFFERSON ON ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1791)

"Hamilton was indeed a singular character. Of acute understanding, disinterested, honest and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society, and duly valuing virtue in private life, yet so bewitched and perverted by the British example, as to be under thorough conviction that corruption was essential to the government of a nation."

LETTERS *(Continued from page 1)*

train and came to Moore Head City, we then took a steam boat with the intention of coming to the fort but when we got to in a 1/2 mile of it, the captian said that the tide was too high to land and we had to go over to Beauford to a better landing place, after we got thare and found that lodging was so high we concluded to get sail boat and come over to the fort, we came over without any trouble. though we had to leave our bagage. it came over this next morning I did not have to pay anything fo my passage except fom the Hotell to the Depot, that was 25 cents I did not have to pay anything at the wharf we staid in John Henreys Hughus Room and eat, our provisions, if we hadent had to pay 50 cents a meal. We had to pay 20 cents for pasage on the sail boat, so we had to pay only 50 cents to get to the Fortt. I am verry well pleased with the pace so fore. John Hughes came down with us but he and Compton went back this Morning they didnt have any idea of staying when they started. I and Warren went over to Beauford yesterday to see the pace. We can see three citys from here viz. Carolinaa City Morehead City and Beauford. Beauford is the largest. the island that the fort is on is 20 miles long and 1 mile wide it is a sandbank with a few shrubs on it the Fort is a hill apparently dug out and wald with brick and inside of thiss wall the rooms are built all around which forms a deck on top of the second wall of rooms there are brest works with cannons placed upon them. the brest works prevents any thing but the head from being exposed to the enemy. The drum has beat for dinner I will finish afterwards. I have been to din-

ner I eat more than I have eat since I have been here, we had beef for dinner it was badly cooked Our fare is good anuff for soldiers if it was cooked well. I joined the company this morning for 12 months and took the oaths to defend the state and to obey the officers our pay I understand will be miledy from home down here 10 cents a mile whitch \$20 and \$15 bounty and \$11 a month which will be \$46 the first month. I havent got time to write any mor at present theirs bad writing spelling and scattering better write soon

Yours, David Thompson

P.S. Tell Pappy that he had better swap work in harvesting. I will send Mary a box of shells with the first one that is passing.

Direct your letter to:

D Thompson

Fort Macon

Orang Guards NC

Fort Macon August the 2nd 1861

Dear Mother

I arived here the monday night about 9 o'clock I would have writen to you befor but have not had time. I had to make up my guard whitch was two days. thare was nothing said about my not being thare at the appointed time I rendered my excuse and it was sufficient. I wrote to Jo yeterday. I and Strud Fauectt are sitting up to-night with Jake Jackson & his Father the old man is not doing very well I wouldnt be surprised if he wasnt takin the fever Jake mends slowly George Stone died last wendsday withe delearam-tremens they carried him home to bury there are two or tree cases of fever here. Browning has the Measles. he broke out today I expect if I am going to have them I will have them shortley. I recon you want to know something about our leaving here. I came with the expetpection of leaving by the 20 if not befor but I expct we will stay the twelve months out Jones tried to get off but he could not he received orders to stay. I believe I would rather go into the field than stay here. Alltho we fare the best here but thare are more honor in the field than here. I was in the hope that Jones could form a regiment and J Millers could get in with his company. there are no chances for it now our privateers has takin two more of old Abes scooners one loaded with coal and the others with fruit. they fetched 6 or 8 more prisnors to us but took them away this morning wer going to put them on bord a charlston vessle some of the boys come home tonight from Hillsboro they say that sylar is elected. I thought that he would be on

account of his not being able to go into the army. I forgot to tell you that we had got our bounty it was \$10.00 we will not get the other untill the first of september. Jones curst the pay Master out for not paying the balance Jasper Haley is coming home befor long if he dont take the measles when he comes I want you to me a box of aples I eat the last of what I brought today. Till Montgomrey that he can get in to the orang Guads till him if he comes to come with somebody and it will not cost him anything. I and Strud are going to hunt shells tomorrow we will not have to drill. write soon. no mor at present.

Yours, David Thompson

Fort Macon August the 19, 1861

Dear Mary

As Jasper Haley is going home tomorrow I will write a few lines and send it by him I wrote to Mother last saturday, and sent the letter by John Hanner. I told him to leave it et Parkes store but I guess he met Parks as he carried it on his way down here, but I recon he carried it on home with him and probably she has got it by this time. I am going to send my box with dirty clothes in with him, and you will find some shells in it, som conks and I didnt have time to scrape them. You must boil them and scrape them and sun them. I and several of our boys O. Woods, Jr. Tyler and Jo Wood again F. Clark J Haley have just moved out of the Fort into a cabin close by, which is a mor pleasant place than inside, we have all the sea breeze, and we are not so crowded as we wer inside, thare was so many crowded in one room. thar I believe it will create sickness in our company, besides the the measlels Browning is very bad off with the measles he took cold with them. We havent left the Fort yet nor went to leave I would just as soon leave as any other way I think that we wil get tierd, befor we get away Cap Jones is elected Colonel of the 7 regiments I dont know wheather he wil except or not, I dont think he will without he can get the Orang Guards in it. We got our bounty money and a shirt and pare of pants we will get our pay, the first of september I was surprised to hear of George Kays death. did he shoot himself axidentiley or did he do it on purpose I recon Davy sam will not go with Millers company now I dont see how he can whare did they find Mr Kay and who found him

The rest of this letter has been deleted due to the personal nature of the material. More letters from David Thompson will appear in the next issue of the Ramparts.

OUTSIDE THE WALLS

by Paul Branch

Of all the buildings and structures which once comprised the Fort Macon military reservation, the only ones still standing today are the fort itself and a brick water cistern outside its walls. Yet while it was in use during the 19th century, the Post of Fort Macon was a small military city which, in addition to the fort itself, was comprised by many other supporting structures no longer standing today. This article is part of a series which will examine the various components of the Post of Fort Macon.

The Post Railroad

If you were a soldier in Fort Macon in the 19th century, think of all the things you would need to have at the fort to ensure your existence and the defense of the fort. You would need a steady supply of provisions every few weeks for yourself and your comrades, all of which is packaged in stout wooden boxes, sacks and large barrels weighing hundreds of pounds. You would also need ammunition to defend the fort - many barrels of gunpowder weighing 125 pounds each and many heavy cannon balls, some weighing 128 pounds each. You would need cannons for the fort's defense, ranging from a 5500-pound 24-pounder cannon to a 16,000-pound columbiad cannon. All these things would have to be delivered to you by ship. But your next problem is this: the fort is located 1500 feet inland from the nearest point where a ship could safely land these items. How do you get these various heavy items over such a distance to the fort itself?

The answer is a railroad. Extending about 1500 feet in length was a railroad over which the fort's garrison would haul their supplies, ammunition and cannons to the fort itself. It was built along an earthen causeway extending from a point adjacent to the fort entrance across a marshy area northwest of the fort to end at a wharf on the north side of Bogue Point near the present eastern boundary of the Fort Macon Coast Guard Base. Whatever items were being received would be off-loaded from supply ships and placed on a flatcar on the railroad. The flatcar would then be pulled to the fort, not with a locomotive, but with a horse or mule. Planks were laid over the cross ties between the rails for the horse to walk up the railroad, pulling the flatcar behind him. A railroad was first built at Fort Macon in 1841 to transport construction materials for an engineer work force engaged in building a system of stone sea jetties on the ocean beach to prevent shore erosion from threatening the fort. The railroad originally extended out to the ocean beach at

each jetty location to enable the engineers to haul the heavy stones used to construct the jetties. The fort garrison also utilized the railroad when possible to haul their supplies to the fort. After the jetty work was completed it is believed the engineers removed the railroad entirely. This is not known with certainty since Coast and Geodetic Survey maps of Beaufort Harbor in 1854 and 1857 show a railroad between the fort and the wharf. Engineer reports prior to 1861 mention no railroad, only a roadway here on an earthen causeway and a 60-foot bridge spanning a marsh creek over which loaded wagons would pass near the foot of the fort slope, or glacis.

It is known that on April 17, 1861, three days after the fort had been seized by Confederate soldiers at the beginning of the War Between the States, an engineer work force "commenced loading schooner with Rail Road Iron and sills for the fort..." The workers then "commenced this morning to lay down the rail road track to the fort..." It was finished at 9 p.m. on April 20. This railroad would be used for more than twenty years.

Confederate soldiers relied heavily upon the railroad to bring in the extensive amounts of provisions, ordnance and ammunition necessary to prepare the fort for war. At one point when cannons began to arrive from Charleston and Richmond, the railroad was actually extended temporarily down into the fort itself on one end and out into the water at the wharf to haul the heavy cannons directly into the center of the fort. A year later, on the eve of the bombardment of Fort Macon by Union forces on April 25, 1862, the Confederate garrison of the fort pulled up the railroad rails and leaned them in stacks against the eastern walls of the fort's interior to give protection against enemy artillery fire.

After Union forces recaptured the fort, the railroad was reestablished between the wharf and the foot of the fort glacis. It continued to be the means by which supplies and provisions were brought into the fort from supply ships. Just before the regular garrison was withdrawn in 1877, a portion of the railroad line was washed away by storms and shore erosion. Much of the line was sanded over. The railroad apparently was removed in the 1880s by engineers working on shore erosion projects on Bogue Point. However, until 1915, Coast and Geodetic Survey charts of Beaufort Harbor continued to show both the railroad and another built a short distance to the east by engineers to haul their materials for shore erosion projects.

No trace of the railroad exists today, but railroad spikes are occasionally found by the park staff around the fort.

Paul Branch is the Ranger/Historian at Fort Macon.

SUMMER CONCERTS IN FORT

This is the sixth consecutive year that the Friends of Fort Macon have sponsored a series of free concerts on the parade ground inside the fort. Over the past years the popularity of these concerts has continued to grow. In 2002 the average attendance at the concerts exceeded 300 delighted fans. There are six musical groups scheduled to perform in 2003. Each group has a distinctive style, but all performances are designed to appeal to a family audience. The performers are all experienced and highly skilled. All of the costs of these performances are covered by audience donations rather than from the Friends treasury. If you are in the area when a concert is scheduled you won't want to miss it. All concerts are scheduled for Friday evenings at 7 o'clock sharp.

June 6 - The Sunshine Band

June 20 - Cumberland and Quorum

July 4 - The Unknown Tongues

July 18 - The Morehead Brass Consortium

Aug. 1 - The Sons of Dixie

Aug. 15 - The Bogue Sounds

MONTHLY LUNCHEON PROGRAMS

Throughout the year, the Friends meet for a Dutch treat lunch at Charlie's (formerly McCalls) restaurant in Morehead City on the first Wednesday of each month. Apart from good food and good fellowship, our members are treated to a generous serving of entertainment and education. Our Program Chairman finds stimulating speakers to present programs which typically draw 80 or 90 members for each one. Here is a sampling of programs for the forthcoming summer period:

July 2nd - Speaker: Jack Goodwin

"History of Morehead City and Current Revitalization"

August 6th - Speaker: Karen Amspacher

"The New Core Sound Water Fowl Museum on Harkers Island"

September 3rd - Speaker: Dr. Hans Paerl, UNC/CH

"Microbes - Canaries of the Sea"

October 1st - Speaker: Bennett Moss

"Great American Speeches -Daniel Webster"

Nov. 5th-Speaker: Jody Merritt, Park Superintendent

"Fort Macon Restoration from Planning to Dedication"

TOURS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Nature Tours

Fridays (July & Aug) 10 a.m. Seining the Sound
Call park office for reservation (726-3775)

Sunday July 20 8:15 a.m. Bird Walk
Meet at fort parking lot

Tuesday July 29 10 a.m. Turtle Talk
Meet at the bathhouse

Tuesday Aug 19 10 a.m. Crabs of Fort Macon
Meet at the bathhouse

Wednesday Aug 27 9 a.m. Wild Flower Hike
Meet at the bathhouse

Military and Fort Activities

Daily 10:00, 11:00, Noon 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 Fort Tours

Weekends 10:30 & 2:30

Civil War Musket Demonstrations

PLUS

Sat. July 19 10:30 to 3:30 Artillery Demonstrations

Sat. July 26 & Sun July 27, 10 until 4

Civil War Reenactment -1st North Carolina Volunteers

Sat. Aug. 30 10:30 to 3:30 Artillery Demonstrations

Sat. Sept 6 & Sun Sept 7, 10 until 4

Civil War Reenactment -1st North Carolina Volunteers

A TOUR WITH LEE

In 1840, Captain Robert E. Lee spent almost two months at Fort Macon conducting an engineer's inspection of the fort's condition and preparation for war. He made several recommendations which resulted in important changes to the fort and the jetties on the shore.

On October 8, 2003, Ranger/Historian Paul Branch will conduct a special tour for Friends members and guests during which he will point out and discuss the improvements that resulted from Captain Lee's report in 1840. The tour group will meet at 10 o'clock in front of the Rangers Office in the fort. This will be a one time special tour, so try to be there.

FIX BAYONETS AND CHARGE!

In the days when soldiers were armed only with single shot muskets, a command such as the one above would surely test the courage of those who had to charge into the deadly fire and bayonets of opposing soldiers.

Fortunately, our volunteer Tour Guides do not have to face death when confronting groups of sometimes skeptical tourists, but it does initially require some amount of courage. But with a little bit of experience and ample quantities of training and knowledge, apprehension is inevitably replaced by great job satisfaction that results from the smiles of an appreciative audience.

With more than one million visitors each year, the Rangers at Fort Macon would be physically unable to provide all those visitors with the meaningful experience that only a guided tour can provide. This year is the seventh year that our volunteer Tour Guides have stepped forward to fill the breach. During the peak season, our Guides lead tours every day of the week, on the hour, beginning at 10 a.m. Following is our current list of volunteer History Guides and Welcomers:

Joe Beam	Jo Anne Kilday
Alan Blankenship	Jack Little
Bob Brown	Shirley Pleace
Bill Burkhardt	John Rhodes
David Burnette	Pat Rister
Emil Cekada	Tibbie Roberts
Dick Cumberland	Frank Rock
Nancy Donnan	Pat Schell
Phyllis Dusenberry	Bill Schmid
Les Ewen	Tom Tempel
Larry Ford	Dan Walker
Ginger Jacocks	Betty Willis
Bill Johnston	Giles Willis
Volunteer Nature Guides	
Cindi Davia	Anne Reeves

All of these wonderful volunteers deserve our deepest appreciation. We especially want to thank Joe Beam who not only coordinates this program, but also handles the megajob of doing all of the scheduling. Thank you all!

THE WAR RETURNS

If, like many others, you are both fascinated and curious about the Civil War, wonderful opportunities await you this summer. The 1st NC Volunteers will be conducting Civil War reenactments in both July and September this year. This group has performed at many Civil War battle sites throughout the United States. Events will be performed throughout each day beginning at 10 a.m. Flag talks, uniform talks, women's dress talks, and musket firings and drills are a few of the programs that will be performed. Each day there will be a simulated skirmish between opposing forces. The reenactors will be living in the fort during each scheduled weekend so you can get a good understanding of what a nineteenth century soldier's life was like. You can also see the new casemate exhibits that are now on display. All in all, these reenactment weekends will provide you with new insights into the War Between the States. Remember these dates:

Saturday, July 26, 10:00 to 4:00

Sunday, July 27, 10:00 to 4:00

Saturday, September 6, 10:00 to 4:00

Sunday, September 7, 10:00 to 4:00

IN MEMORIAM

Bob and Sue Wolfe both died in May 2003. Members of the first group of Tour Guides to be trained in 1997, the Wolfes were outstanding Friends volunteers who will be sorely missed. Memorials may be made in their honor to the Friends of Fort Macon, marked Bob and Sue Wolfe

memorial. They will be used for additions to the reference library housed in the Ranger's office at the fort and available to tour guides for further study. The Friends address is PO Box 651, Beaufort, NC 28516.

