

FORT MACON RAMPARTS

Award Winning Publication of the Friends of Fort Macon

Volume XII Issue 3
Fall 2005



Born in 1842 and died in 1899. He was one of the few men to become famous both in physical and psychical science. Both a leading American naturalist and philosopher. Went to a Baptist college, now Columbia University, where he earned an Bachelors, Masters, PHD & MD. Ten years in military service as surgeon. Then appointed naturalist of the U. S. northern boundary commission which surveyed the line along the forty-ninth parallel from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains.

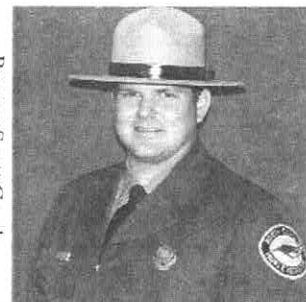
www.birdnature.com/feb1900/comes.html
by C.C. Marble

So who is this bearded man? What did he have to do with Fort Macon? Why do some people say he's for the birds?

YOUR GUESS HERE
SPELLING COUNTS

answer on page 5

Ranger Scott Crocker



A big thank you goes to Ranger Scott Crocker and his crew for making sure everything was ready for our wonderful performers in this season's concert schedule: THE SUNSHINE BAND, MOREHEAD BRASS CONSORTIUM, CONNIE AND THE MAD MADINGOS, UNKNOWN TONGUES, THE CARTERET GRAYS AND CUMBERLAND AND QUORUM.

See page 7 for pictures

YOUR MAILING LABEL SHOWS THE LAST TIME YOUR MEMBERSHIP WAS RENEWED.
YOU ARE CURRENT IF IT READS 9/01/05 OR LATER.
LIFE MEMBERS PLEASE IGNORE

Luncheon Meetings

Golden Corral - 4060 Arendell St. Morehead City

JOIN US FOR LUNCH AT 11:30

MEETING STARTS 12 NOON

Wednesday September 7 - Lynn Salsi

"Voices of the Crystal Coast"

Wednesday October 5 - John Wood

"Old and New Preservation Projects"

Wednesday November 2 - Ben Casey

"Living Waters-Falls Dam to Pamlico Sound"

No Meeting in December

Wednesday January 4 - Bill Morris

"Salt Water Cowboys"

Wednesday February 1 - Sammy Pou Doughton

"Old Reminiscences of Morehead City"

Superintendent's Comments

September

It is hard to believe that the summer season is coming to an end. We were finally able to fill our summer seasonal positions, and, now they are leaving to go back to school. Our seasonals this year came from many different states. We had lifeguards from Kansas and New York, refreshment stand people from Pennsylvania and the historian was from Texas. I would again like to thank the tour guides for the outstanding work they did this summer. With the crowds we have, the park could not offer as many programs as we did without their help. The summer concerts were well attended this year. We always receive calls about them, and people have begun to expect them when they are in the area.

As the fall approaches, the park looks forward to working on the plans for the reconstruction of the Officer's Quarters Building. I know it seems like progress has been slow on this project, but it takes time to put together plans and raise funds for construction. With this building we will be able to add new dimensions to the overall historical interpretation of the fort. We have received support from our Raleigh office and the Division of Archives and History for this outstanding project. As work progresses we will be calling on the Friends members for their expertise and support.

Remember the final reenactment weekend for this year is September 17th and 18th. Please come and join us for this event. Hope everyone had a fun and safe summer.



Proposed Officer's Quarters



Superintendent Jody Merritt

*OUR VOLUNTEER
PROGRAM CHAIR,
GWYN TOWLES,
DESERVES A ROUND OF
APPLAUSE FOR HER
WONDERFUL PLANNING
OF OUR PROGRAMS*



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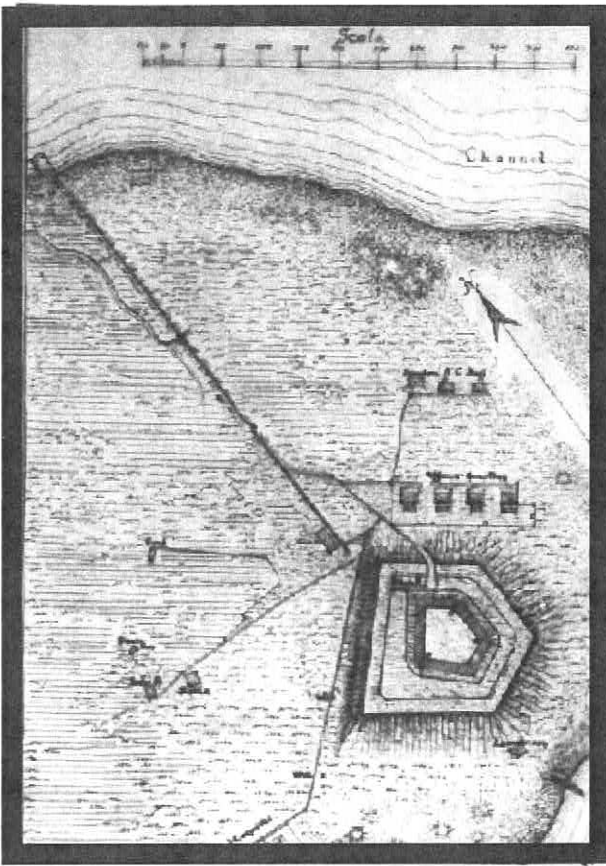
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OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF FORT MACON



Of all the buildings and structures that 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 that, in addition to the fort itself, was comprised by many other supporting structures no longer standing today. What were these structures? Where were they located and what did they look like? This article is part of a series that will examine the various components of the Post of Fort Macon.

The "Sink"

Many people tour Fort Macon each day and contemplate what it was like to be a soldier there over a century ago. As they do, most will eventually wonder about that timeless aspect of humanity that faced the 19th century soldiers just as it does modern visitors:

Where did they go to the toilet?

Fort Macon was not constructed with any provision for toilet facilities. For those who were stationed at the post, a privy building was built outside the fort to serve their needs in this regard. It was called "the sink." The location of the sink was almost 200 yards west of the north angle of the fort's outer wall. It was apparently elevated on pilings and extended out over the marshy headwaters of nearby Cowpen Creek (now the boat basin of U.S. Coast Guard Base Fort Macon). It was reached by a wooden walkway.

Because privies were such ordinary, mundane items in these times, it is not surprising that there is little description to be found of it in the fort's records. However, one inspecting officer in November, 1869, Lieutenant Colonel James E. Totten, described it as follows: "The privy provided for the enlisted men is a fairly adapted yellow pine frame building, located at a very considerable distance from the barracks occupied by the men— which however cannot well be avoided owing to the contracted character of the fort itself." Fort Surgeon Elliott Coues wrote of it in 1870: "A large and well-constructed sink is located on the edge of the marsh, within high water mark, so that the excreta are constantly carried away by the tide."

The officers of the post apparently had a separate privy, probably located in or adjacent to the same building. Lieutenant Colonel Totten found this to be highly objectionable. In his 1869 inspection report he wrote:

"There are no privies whatever connected with the Casemate quarters occupied by officers and their families at Fort Macon; and in consequence, the officers themselves and the ladies of their families are obliged, in obeying the calls of nature, to pass out by the guard and in full view of the entire command, to privies located at least two hundred yards from their quarters, and beyond the limits of the slope of the glacis. It is easy to perceive the inconvenience and indelicacy to which ladies are subjected by this disgraceful condition of things; and it is earnestly recommended for the decency and respectability of the Service; and for the comfort and convenience of the officers &c. concerned, that privies to each set of Casemate quarters occupied by officers at Fort Macon be erected in the main ditch of the work; and that the embrasures of these Casemate be cut down to the floors and otherwise altered into convenient door-ways for communication to the privies."

The War Department did not act upon this latter recommendation. The officers, enlisted men, wives and children, as well as the prisoners in confinement at the fort after the War Between the States, all continued to make that long walk (or run) down to the sink for relief throughout Fort Macon's use as a U.S. military post in the 19th century.

by Paul Branch, Jr



Ranger Paul Branch, Jr is the Fort Macon Historian. He has published two books on the fort and numerous articles

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WHY MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT?

The next major project for the Friends of Fort Macon is the construction of a replica of an officer's house that was located at the Fort shortly after the Civil War. Funding for this project has to be developed by the Friends from private sources. A strong and ever expanding Friends membership is most important to a successful fund raising campaign.

Starting with the Spring issue in 2006, the Fort Macon Ramparts will be emailed to all who desire this service. By receiving the Ramparts via email, you will receive the issue faster and help us save on the cost of snail mail (US Postal Service). If you are interested in receiving an email edition, please submit your name, home address and email address to

fortmacon1977@yahoo.com.

Answer from page one - Dr. Elliott Coues

Ranger Randy Newman found these excerpts from : "A Report on Barracks and Hospitals With Descriptions of Military Posts" written in 1870 by Dr. Elliott Coues (we think it is pronounced "cows"). In them he describes the natural environment as he saw it in 1870.

No condos, no roads, lots of wild life!

FORT MACON, NORTH CAROLINA

(Report of Assistant Surgeon Elliott Coues, United States Army, dated June 30, 1870)

"Fort Macon occupies the eastern extremity of Borden or Bogue Island, commanding Beaufort Harbor, one of the southern outlets of Pamlico Sound. The town of Beaufort lies about two miles off, a little east of north, across the harbor. Morehead City, at the same distance westwardly, is the terminus of the Atlantic and North Carolina railroad. Fort Johnston, some 80 miles distant, is the nearest military post.

"The island is a mere sand-bar, lying nearly due east and west, separated from the mainland by a narrow, shallow sound (Bogue Sound). It is 26 miles long, with an average width of less than a mile. The sea front is a gently undulating beach, flanked by extensive sand-hills, which slope gradually to a low, flat marsh on the sound side, a narrow strip of comparatively fertile soil intervening. The sand-hills are constantly shifting, and the marsh is mostly overflowed at high tide. Part of the island is wooded, but the eastern extremity is treeless for several miles. The neighboring island of Shackleford has the same general character; the adjoining mainland is low, and consists chiefly of sandy tracts, pine-barrens, and swamps. Beaufort Harbor is shallow, and obstructed by numerous extensive shoals; the channel, navigable for vessels of ordinary tonnage, is narrow and tortuous; it sweeps around the point of the island close to the fort. The deepest soundings, for some miles, do not exceed eight fathoms; the average in the main channel is only about half as much; the bottom is mostly sandy, often shelly, occasionally clayey and muddy in the shallowest places. Vessels reach the wharf at the railroad terminus, but only those of lightest draught go to Beaufort. The bottom, as well as the coast line, is subject to constant change, and hydrographic surveys can be relied upon, in detail, for only comparatively short periods.

"This locality is in the midst of the auriferous region which extends from Long Island to North Florida. There are no rocks whatever in the vicinity, except those that have been brought hither. The beach consists of pure sand mixed with shelly detritus.

"It is evident, from the foregoing considerations, that the foundations of the fort

are to be looked upon with some suspicion, and that in engineering operations the unstable nature of the ground should be held in view. A useful lesson may be learned from the fact that the site of Fort Hamilton [Hampton] is now indicated by a line of breakers, nearly a mile off. The present fort has been in imminent danger from the encroachment of the sea, the water having reached to the base of the glacis. It was preserved by a system of stone jetties, by means of which the beach was carried some 200 yards or more away from the fort. Although they have thus far answered their design, the fort must still be regarded as in an exposed and precarious condition. The channel, as already stated, sweeps rapidly close in shore around the point of the island, with constant erosive action. The trend of the land lays it open to the prevailing and the most violent winds. The open sea beats directly upon the beach, and the sand-hills are always shifting. As long as the fort is not defended by extensive and permanent masonry, care should be taken to disturb the surface as little as possible, since every formed or forming sand-hill is something of a natural protection. The more grass and weeds are allowed to grow about the fort the better, as they help to bind down the sand. Any gully that might be formed by the rain, or other cause, in the glacis, would enlarge indefinitely, and be difficult to remedy.....

The present fort has been in imminent danger from the encroaching of the sea, water having reached to the base of the glacis.

"The reservation comprises about a mile of the end of the island; the limits are at present indicated by a few stakes standing here and there in the mud of the marsh, of which the whole consists, with the exception of the sandy sea-front above mentioned.....

"The insects of the locality that have any special relations with man are chiefly those affecting him injuriously. Various species of wood-ticks abound; while indoors the bedbugs and a species of roach are only too common. Crab louse is the characteristic representative of the parasites. The garrison, probably, is never free from its infestation. The prevalence of southwest winds free us in part from the mosquitoes, but these and a sand midge are often annoying pests in summer. The waters give employment and support to a large part of the population and furnish important additions to the army ration. A dozen or more

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medium-sized fish may always be taken at the wharf, and fishing for these is the chief amusement of the troops. Of larger fish the "sheepshead," two species of drum, and the sea trout, are abundant in season and easily secured. Blue fish are abundant late in summer, and trolling for them furnishes the most agreeable and healthful exercise that is had here. The most important fishing, however, in the commercial point of view, is undoubtedly that of the mullet, vast shoals of which make their appearance late in the fall. They are only taken in the seine.

Of useless or hurtful fish may be mentioned the various species of rays, or stingers, as they are called. The wound from the spine of the tail is tedious, painful and even dangerous. Sharks of different species, including the hammerhead, are sufficiently large and numerous to require the exercise of some caution in bathing. Like the rest of the Carolina coasts this locality is noted as a habitat of the somewhat celebrated devil fish, which must not, however, be confounded with any of the smaller species of rays that commonly receive the same name. Reptiles furnish only two species of economic consequence. These are the loggerhead turtle and the terrapin, both of which are excellent for the table. Of venomous reptiles I have noticed but two—the rattlesnake and copperhead: both are common in swampy wooded places. The island itself seems singularly destitute of frogs; though several occur in the mainland. I have noticed four species of harmless snakes and three of harmless lizards about the fort. One of the latter, the glass snake, is the most abundant and characteristic reptile of the island. The alligator is a frequent inhabitant of the swamps in the vicinity. Out of over 200 species of birds that I record from the locality, several species are of special economic importance. With the exception of

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the quail, which is abundant on the mainland, though shunning the barren island, these belong, as was to have been anticipated, to the waders and swimmers. The first named furnish chiefly in spring and fall during the migration curlew, plover, various kinds of snipe, and sand birds and rail. All these are abundant, and

may be procured with little trouble. In November, and during the winter, water fowl throng the harbor. They are represented by two or three kinds of geese and a dozen or more of ducks, as mallard, teal, widgeon, red-heads, and raft ducks; but the most abundant water fowl, the fishing duck, is hardly eatable. The various pelagic birds that enter the harbor are rather interesting in their scientific aspects than important from our present standpoint. In a sanitary point of view there are three species of decided consequence: the turkey buzzard, fish crow, and herring gull, which effectually remove the garbage that is carried out of the fort.

Opossum is common...gray fox, mink, otter, and raccoon...noxious species... are rat and mouse. "The list of indigenous mammals is comparatively small. Deer occur in numbers in the vicinity, and venison is sometimes as cheap as beef. They are said to reside on the wooded portion of the island itself as well as on the mainland. A hare is the most abundant and characteristic mammal of the island. The opossum is common. Among fur-bearing animals may be mentioned the gray fox, mink, otter, and raccoon. Our noxious species are confined to the rat and mouse, naturalized species that have permanent foothold about the fort....."

"There are no springs upon the island, and the pools, etc., are all more or less subject to the tides; all the water is brackish and most of it somewhat hard. It may be procured anywhere by sinking a barrel or two. I do not, however, indorse the current opinion that it is sea water filtered through the sand...."

Looking for a few good workers

If you check page 2, you will see we have committee chair openings. It is important for us to have more people working for the organization. Please consider helping on one of the committees.

We need help:

Getting brochures printed and distributed

Getting money to build

the new/old officer's quarters

Setting-up the musicians for the concert series

And much more.

Contact us at: P.O.Box 651, Beaufort, NC 28516-0651

email: friends@clis.com



**THANK YOU
MARYANN MOLNAR
FOR ANNOUNCING OUR
2005 CONCERT SERIES**