

FORT ANDERSON



One Shovelful at a Time



CONFEDERATE LIFELINE

In 1861–1862, Col. William Lamb and Maj. John Hedrick constructed Fort Anderson, one of several Confederate strongholds that protected Wilmington, a major blockade-running port. They enlarged Fort St. Philip (for St. Philip's Anglican Church on your right), an earthen wall with gun emplacements that extended from the ruin to the Cape Fear River and renamed it Fort Anderson. Although Lamb had no engineering experience, he applied to the building of fortifications what engineers had learned during the Crimean War (1854–1856). In July 1862, he assumed command of Fort Fisher downstream and transformed it into the world's largest earthwork. There, as here at Fort Anderson, slaves and Indians moved the dirt and sand one shovelful at a time. Closer to the river here,



Gen. Johnson Hagood

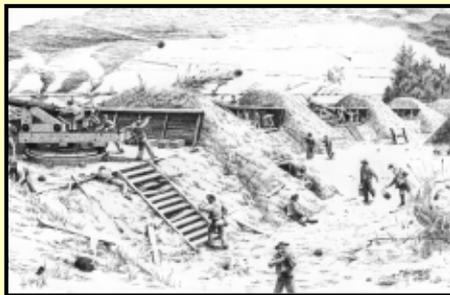


Col. William Lamb

you can see the massive artillery emplacements that mounted nine seacoast cannons, while movable field artillery pieces were positioned in this area. Large underground chambers sheltered the garrison and the volatile black powder supply during bombardments.

In January and February 1865, when the Federals captured Fort Fisher and Wilmington to cut the Confederate supply line to Virginia, Confederate forces under Gen. Johnson Hagood retreated here from Fort

Fisher. The Federals soon followed and found Gen. Robert F. Hoke's Confederates entrenched from the fort west to Orton Pond. For three days, Union Gen. Jacob D. Cox demonstrated in front of the fort and Hoke, had gunboats in the river shell the fort, and marched a flanking force around Orton Pond to attack the fort's unprotected rear. During the early morning of February 19, as the attack began, Hagood evacuated Fort Anderson, and the Federals immediately occupied it.



Fort Anderson battle scene, by Stephen McCall



Pvt. James Croom,
Co. B, 1st Battalion,
N.C. Heavy Artillery stationed at Fort Anderson



Fort Anderson, showing line of attack by gunboats