

THE WAR COMES TO WARSAW



Lewis's Railroad Raid



CONFEDERATE LIFELINE

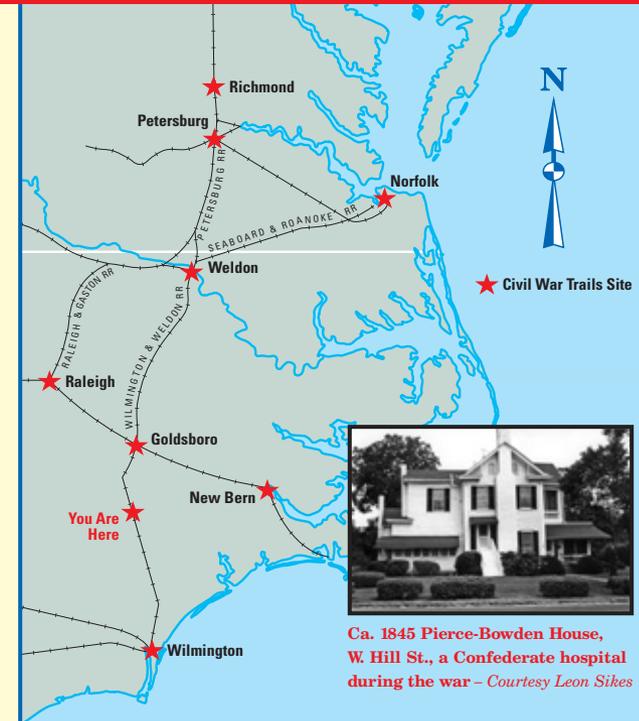
During the war, the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad was part of a rail network that transported vital supplies north to Confederate forces in Virginia. Cutting that line became an important Union objective.

On July 5, 1863, Lt. Col. George W. Lewis's 3rd New York Cavalry struck Warsaw at 6 A.M., after burning the Confederate States Armory at Kenansville the day before and emptying a safe (now on display at the Duplin County

Veterans Museum) of a large amount of Confederate money. Lewis's primary mission was to demolish Wilmington and Weldon Railroad track. His troopers destroyed two miles of track and telegraph wire, removing the wire and cutting down the poles.

Here in Warsaw, two rail cars, a freight house full of Confederate stores, about 4,000 barrels of resin and turpentine, and some gunpowder were destroyed. Lewis's men took about 150 head of livestock and several bags of mail with them when they left, as well as 30 prisoners. About 400 black men, women, and children followed the Union forces as they rode away, back east through Kenansville toward Trenton in the afternoon. En route, the Federals burned a barn containing hundreds of pounds of bacon; the aroma filled the air here for several days thereafter.

Lewis's departure may have been prompted in part by the proximity of four companies of Confederate infantry and four artillery pieces stationed ten miles south of here at Magnolia.



Federal cavalrymen destroying railroad track - Courtesy Library of Congress

A locomotive pulled fourteen empty boxcars to Magnolia from Warsaw to fetch the troops before Lewis arrived; however, they did not come, and his attack and withdrawal were unimpeded.