

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name New Bern Battlefield Site

other name/site number none

2. Location

street & number E. and W. of US 70 E., approx. 4.5 miles SE of New Bern not for publication

city or town New Bern vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Craven code 049 zip code 28560

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic places and meets procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPD 8/17/01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal Agency and bureau Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

New Bern Battlefield Site
Name of Property

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County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
2	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

1. Defense: fortification
2. Defense: battle site
3. Transportation: rail related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

1. Transportation: rail related
2. Landscape: forest
3. Landscape: natural feature

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation N/A
- walls N/A
- roof N/A
- other N/A

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

see attached

New Bern Battlefield Site
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Period of Significance

March 14, 1862

Significant Dates

March 14, 1862

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography see attached

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

New Bern Battlefield Site
Name of property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 99

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	3 1 5 7 1 0	3 8 7 9 8 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 8	3 1 6 1 6 0	3 8 8 0 1 0 0

3	1 8	3 1 6 2 6 0	3 8 7 9 9 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	1 8	3 1 6 2 8 0	3 8 7 9 9 0 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

see attached

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

see attached

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joseph E. Brent

organization Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc. date June 1, 2001

street & number 129 Walnut Street telephone 859-879-8509

city or town Versailles state KY zip code 40383

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name see attached

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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New Bern Battlefield Site

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Battle of New Bern

The New Bern Battlefield Site is located in the southern one-third of Craven County, approximately four-and-a-half miles southeast of the City of New Bern. The battle was fought along a defensive line that extended approximately 8,500 feet from Fort Thompson, on the Neuse River, on the east, to a swamp formed by Bullen's Branch, a tributary of Brice's Creek, on the west. Although this was a single line, it was actually broken up into two distinct parts that were bisected by the Atlantic and Northern Railroad track (now Norfolk Southern Railroad), west of the center of the line. The portion of the earthworks east of the railroad was a straight line that ran from the tracks to Fort Thompson. The western portion of the line stepped back 150 yards north from the eastern line. It was secured closest to the railroad by an unfinished redan constructed in a brickyard and continued to the west following a low ridgeline above the swamp formed by Bullen's Branch. On this western line a series of earthworks, including several redans, were constructed to defend the area against the expected assault by Union infantry. Over the past 139 years commercial and residential development in the area where the battle occurred has caused the battlefield to become fragmented. Today, there are only two discontinuous areas which retain integrity: a trench line east of US 70, just north of the Jaycees Fairgrounds, and the Confederate line and battleground west of the US 70, south and east of the Taberna Subdivision (Figure 1).

The line east of the railroad

The Confederate line east of the railroad ran in a straight line from Fort Thompson on the Neuse River to the railroad, a distance of approximately 5,000 feet. The Confederate forces built earthworks along this line and enhanced it with abatis, that is, downed trees and brush which were placed in front of the trench as obstacles for enemy infantry. Today, what remains of this line are discontinuous portions of the infantry trench. The longest of these is approximately 1,500 feet long and is in a wooded area just east of US 70 and north of the Jaycees Fairgrounds. The earthwork line is straight and readily identifiable, however, the only portion of the battlefield on the east of US 70 which has integrity is the earthwork itself. The approach from the south that Union troops would have made to the earthwork is now the fairgrounds and the area north of the earthwork is a 1960s housing development which fronts on Bradford Drive. The nominated area is a section of earthworks 1,500 feet long and approximately thirty feet wide, approximately one acre, that fronts on the Jaycees Fairgrounds and backs up to the Bradford Drive subdivision. The remainder of the trench line can be seen in front yards along Fort

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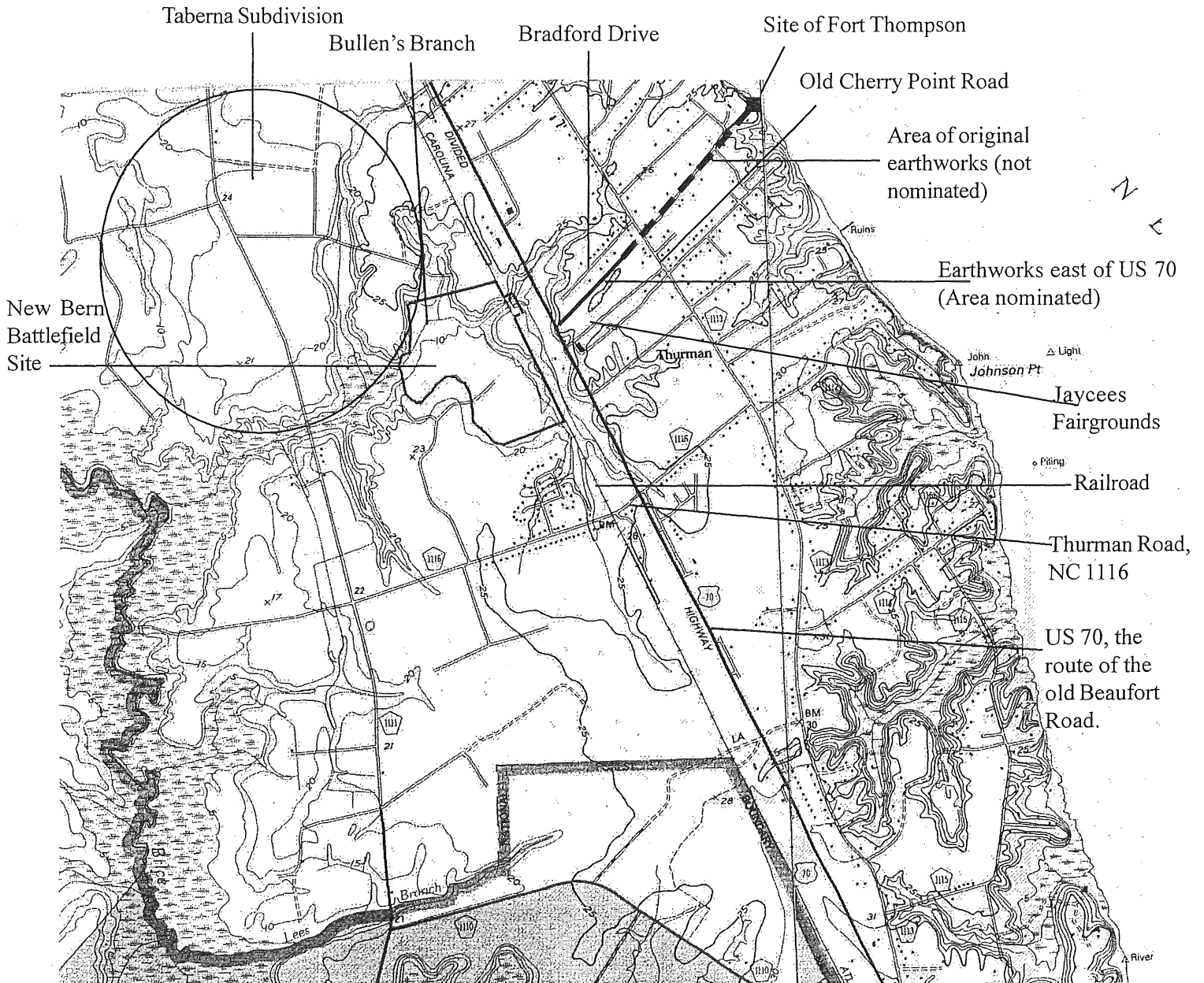


Figure 1: Overview of the New Bern Battlefield Site

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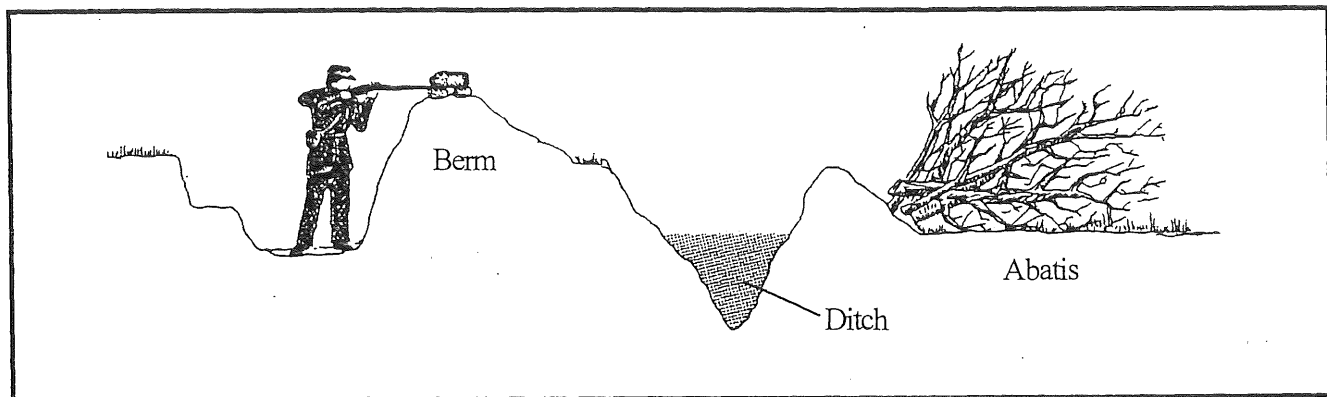


Figure 2: Cross-section of an Earthwork

Road. The 1,500 feet of the earthwork line which is being nominated has integrity of location, design, and association, and to some extent it has integrity of setting and feeling.

Confederate engineers designed a series of obstacles to stop Union forces before they reached the City of New Bern. The earthwork on the east side of US 70 was a major part of the defensive preparation. The earthwork line was anchored on the Neuse River by Fort Thompson and on the railroad track to the west. The earthwork line was a straight, linear trench which was designed to shelter soldiers from attackers, yet allow the defenders to fire at the enemy as they approached. To further slow attackers, abatis, i.e. downed trees and branches, were placed in front of the trench. This was the Civil War equivalent of the barbed wire which would be used in subsequent wars (Figure 2). The area where the battle was fought east of US 70 is flat. Union soldiers would have to approach the line in view of the soldiers behind the earthwork. The earthwork line is in the location where it was originally constructed and the earthen berm built by the Confederate engineers is clearly visible. In 1862 the earthwork would have been in an area that had been cleared to allow the defenders a clear field of fire. Today, the earthwork is in a wooded area where the viewshed from the trench line is limited by the surrounding vegetation, giving the illusion of a pristine Civil War feature. However, just to the south of the tree line is the Jaycees Fairgrounds, which is simply open space that has been cleared and leveled by the Jaycees. To the north of the trench line is the 1960s housing development on Bradford Drive. Even in the winter months it is difficult to see the houses and the fairgrounds from the earthwork line.

The integrity of feeling is affected by the same factors discussed for setting. The trench line is still readily identifiable as a Civil War earthwork. If the viewer is standing on the earthen berm, or behind it as the soldiers would have been, it would be recognizable by the soldiers who built it, fought behind it and attacked it. However, the fairgrounds and the housing development are just beyond the woods which covers the trench.

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The Confederate line and battleground west of US 70

The single most important event in the Battle of New Bern took place just east of the railroad track in what was called Wood's Brickyard. Between 11 a.m. and Noon, March 14, 1862, Union soldiers broke through the Confederate line at this place and were able to get behind the Confederate soldiers east of the railroad and force them to retreat. The battle west of the railroad continued longer. The Confederate troops positioned there were better protected as the line was not a straight line trench but in a series of redans, "V"-shaped earthworks thirty feet or so in length and open on the back, stretched out along a ridge line north of Bullen's Branch. Here, Confederate soldiers continued to fight until they realized that the rest of their army was in full scale retreat. The soldiers then had no other choice but to retreat as well, or be cut off from their comrades and captured by the Union army.

This portion of the battlefield is ninety-eight acres. It is in an area bounded on the north and west by the Taberna Subdivision and to the east by the Norfolk Southern Railroad and an unnamed tributary of Bullen's Branch. To the south, the boundary follows a ridge line which begins just south of the swamp formed by Bullen's Branch, curving in to the east and then southeast, just above a subdivision north of Thurman Road.

This area has integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. The Confederate engineers constructed a series of redans (earthworks) along the ridges north of Bullen's Branch just west of the railroad. This area was chosen to anchor the Confederate line because the swamp created by the stream would have prevented the Union soldiers from flanking the Confederate line, that is, getting around the end of it. There are three redans approximately thirty to fifty feet in length on the ridge line and an earthwork trench line approximately seventy feet long near the railroad track that are clearly visible.

This was the portion of the line manned by the 26th and 33rd North Carolina Infantry Regiments during the crucial stage of the battle. The area is wooded and the earthworks are on ridges overlooking the creek and floodplain. To the west and north of the line of earthworks is the Taberna Subdivision. The backs of some of the houses in the subdivision can be seen from the extreme north and western most earthworks when the trees are bare of leaves. The land owned by the New Bern Historical Society and the land to the south, owned by Weyerhaeuser and the Stevens, are undeveloped tracts which are bisected by streams, upland ridges and wetlands. This landscape has not changed since the battle and was the reason why this area was chosen as part of the Confederate defense line.

Just south and east of the area where the earthworks are located are the remains of Wood's Brickyard. This area is just east of the railroad track on a lot between a Nissan car dealership and a

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Honda/Kawasaki off-road vehicle dealership. This wooded lot is bisected by an unnamed tributary of Bullen's Branch and remains undeveloped. The area around Wood's Brickyard was the weak point in the Confederate line. It was set back 150 yards from the main line east of the railroad and was manned by inexperienced Confederate militia. It was here that Federal troops broke through. Although the rear of two retail establishments can be seen from this portion of the battlefield when the leaves are down the ground itself, and its location adjacent to the western end of the Confederate line, make it extremely important in understanding how the Battle of New Bern unfolded. While the retail establishments do compromise the site to some extent, it still retains enough integrity to be included in this nomination.

The Battle of New Bern was listed in the congressionally mandated 1992 Civil War Advisory Commission Survey (CWSAC) as a Priority IV Class B battlefield. This designation means that the battle had a "direct, or decisive, influence on its campaign." Unfortunately, the Priority IV ranking means that the battlefield is fragmented. Observations of the battlefield by the consultants concur with the findings of the CWSAC. There is no doubt that the Union victory at New Bern had a "direct, or decisive, influence on its campaign." The Federal victory at New Bern was crucial to the remainder of the campaign undertaken by the Union army. Securing the port and rail center at New Bern gave the Union army a base of operations that they would hold throughout the remainder of the war.

As noted above, it was determined that the battlefield, while important to understanding the campaign, is indeed fragmented. However, the battlefield retains enough integrity to demonstrate how the battle was fought and why the Union forces won. The Battle of New Bern was crucial to both the outcome of Burnside's 1862 North Carolina Campaign and to understanding that campaign.

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Summary

The Battle of New Bern, fought on March 14, 1862, is significant under National Register Criterion A, within the context of the American Civil War. It is being nominated as having statewide significance. The Civil War is one of the watershed events in American history. The Battle of New Bern was included in the 1992 congressionally mandated Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Survey of 384 principal battles in twenty-six states. It was determined to be a Priority IV Class B site. A Priority IV ranking means that it is a fragmented battlefield and Class B means it had a "direct, or decisive, influence on its campaign." The Battle of New Bern was one of a series of battles that made up what is now called Burnside's 1862 North Carolina Campaign. This campaign is significant in that it was the first major amphibious operation undertaken by Union forces during the Civil War. It secured all of the North Carolina posts, with the exception of Wilmington, for the Union and it propelled General Ambrose E. Burnside into the national spotlight, which eventually led to his obtaining the command of the Army of the Potomac, the most prestigious command in the Union Army.¹

The Campaign

In the summer of 1861 Union forces captured the Confederate forts guarding the Hatteras Inlet the only inlet deep enough to allow ocean going vessels access to the sounds and river ports in North Carolina. Once the Union army had secured Hatteras they initially planned to close the inlet by sinking ships in the passage and establishing a coaling station on the Outer Banks for the Union blockading fleet. General George B. McClellan, the new commander of the Union army, and General Ambrose E. Burnside, devised a plan that would not only block the inlet to Confederate shipping, but seize the important river and railroad cities of New Bern and Goldsboro. This operation would have a two-fold purpose. It would threaten Confederate transportation networks supplying their troops in Virginia and it would provide additional ports for Union blockading ships.²

Once the plan for the operation was approved, Burnside began gathering the men and materials that he would need to get his amphibious force from Maryland to North Carolina. Burnside's campaign offered the Union army the opportunity to create a modified "Anaconda Plan." The original plan was designed to place the Confederacy in an economic stranglehold by blockading ports on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and cutting off its access to the Mississippi River. Burnside's Campaign would go a step further, it would actually seize Confederate ports and railheads rather than simply blockading them.³

The campaign began in February, 1862, at Roanoke Island, and ended in June, 1862, at Trantors Creek, just outside of Washington, North Carolina. Even though Burnside failed to take Wilmington, or take

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Goldsboro and cut the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, after the campaign Union forces controlled the North Carolina coast from Morehead City to the Virginia state line.

Following a string of Union disasters that began with the Battle of Bull Run near Manassas, Virginia, in July, 1861 the command of the Union Army passed to General George B. McClellan. The "Young Napoleon" was a Democrat and a self-promoter who pledged to bring renewed vigor to the Army of the Potomac and bring victory to the Union cause.⁴

McClellan and Burnside had been business partners before the war, as officers in the Illinois Central Railroad. Perhaps for this reason, McClellan chose his old friend to lead a daring expedition against coastal North Carolina. It was to be an amphibious operation and Burnside was to have fifteen regiments and ample funding for the equipment he would need. The force was to assemble in Maryland and proceed to North Carolina. The expedition was planned in the fall, but it would be winter before it set sail.⁵

Burnside's expedition set out from Annapolis, Maryland on January 6, 1862. It sailed past Fortress Monroe, Virginia, on January 11 and on to Hatteras Inlet. The flotilla fought storms, high seas and the shallow waters of the inlet for weeks. Burnside would not have all of his troops on solid ground until the end of January.⁶

Around January 30, 1862 Burnside received word that the Confederate garrison on Roanoke Island was being reinforced. He quickly made preparation to move on the island and by February 5 he had set his flotilla in motion. Burnside had 13,000 soldiers and 67 ships and he soon brought that force to bear upon the 2,500 Confederates who defended Roanoke Island, "the Key to North Carolina."⁷

It was a very uneven fight from the start. The Confederates were under the command of General Henry A. Wise. Wise had tried to move heaven and earth to obtain proper arms and ammunition to defend the coast of North Carolina, but had failed, through no fault of his own, to do so. The Confederate government in Richmond simply could not, or would not, send adequate men and munitions to North Carolina. Wise had to make do with what he had and it proved to be not nearly enough.⁸

The Battle of Roanoke Island began in the early morning hours of February 7, 1862. Union vessels bombarded the Confederate forts on Roanoke Island and attacked the Confederate fleet in Croatan Sound. In the end, the forts fared much better than the Confederate States Navy. Of the seven vessels

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engaged, two were sunk, one was captured, two scuttled by their crew and the last two fled for the safety of Elizabeth City. After the Confederate Navy had been dispersed, Burnside began landing his soldiers and by 10 p.m. he had 7,500 men ashore.⁹

The next morning the Union attack was renewed with vigor. The Confederate defenders had constructed an earthen fortification across the island's main road. It held three antiquated guns and was flanked by swamps. The Union troops both flanked, i.e. attacked the ends of the Confederate line through the swamps, and assaulted the line head on. The result was a decisive Federal victory. All of the Confederate troops on the island surrendered. Burnside had secured the island and began his preparations for an assault on New Bern.¹⁰

A month elapsed before Burnside moved on New Bern. During the interim Union forces kept busy. They destroyed what was left of the Confederate fleet at Elizabeth City, occupied Elizabeth City, placed obstructions in the Chesapeake and Albemarle Canal and destroyed the Confederate fort at Cobb's Point.¹¹

The Battle of New Bern - Preparation

Confederate General Lawrence O'Bryan Branch had been given command of the District of the Pamlico. His headquarters was to be in New Bern and his task was to defend the city and the district. Branch arrived in New Bern in November of 1861 and set about making preparations to strengthen his defenses. The general tried to rally the support of the local people but was mostly unsuccessful. In March 1862 Branch had some 4,000, troops, mostly untried, and some ill-prepared earthworks with which to defend New Bern.¹²

The Confederate forces in New Bern were woefully unprepared for Burnside's army, even though Branch had worked to improve the defenses. Initially, the Confederate plan was to defend the New Bern area by erecting earthworks ten miles south of the city. This line, known as the Croatan Works, ran from Fort Dixie on the Neuse River three-quarters of a mile to a dense swamp. The fortified line crossed the road that the enemy would have to march up to reach New Bern.¹³

Farther up the road, Confederate engineers had constructed a series of forts to guard the water approaches to New Bern as protection from a seaborne invasion (figure 3). Fort Thompson, which would anchor the Confederate line in the battle, had thirteen guns, ten of which were trained on the river. The Confederate engineers charged with the defense of New Bern did not put much emphasis on

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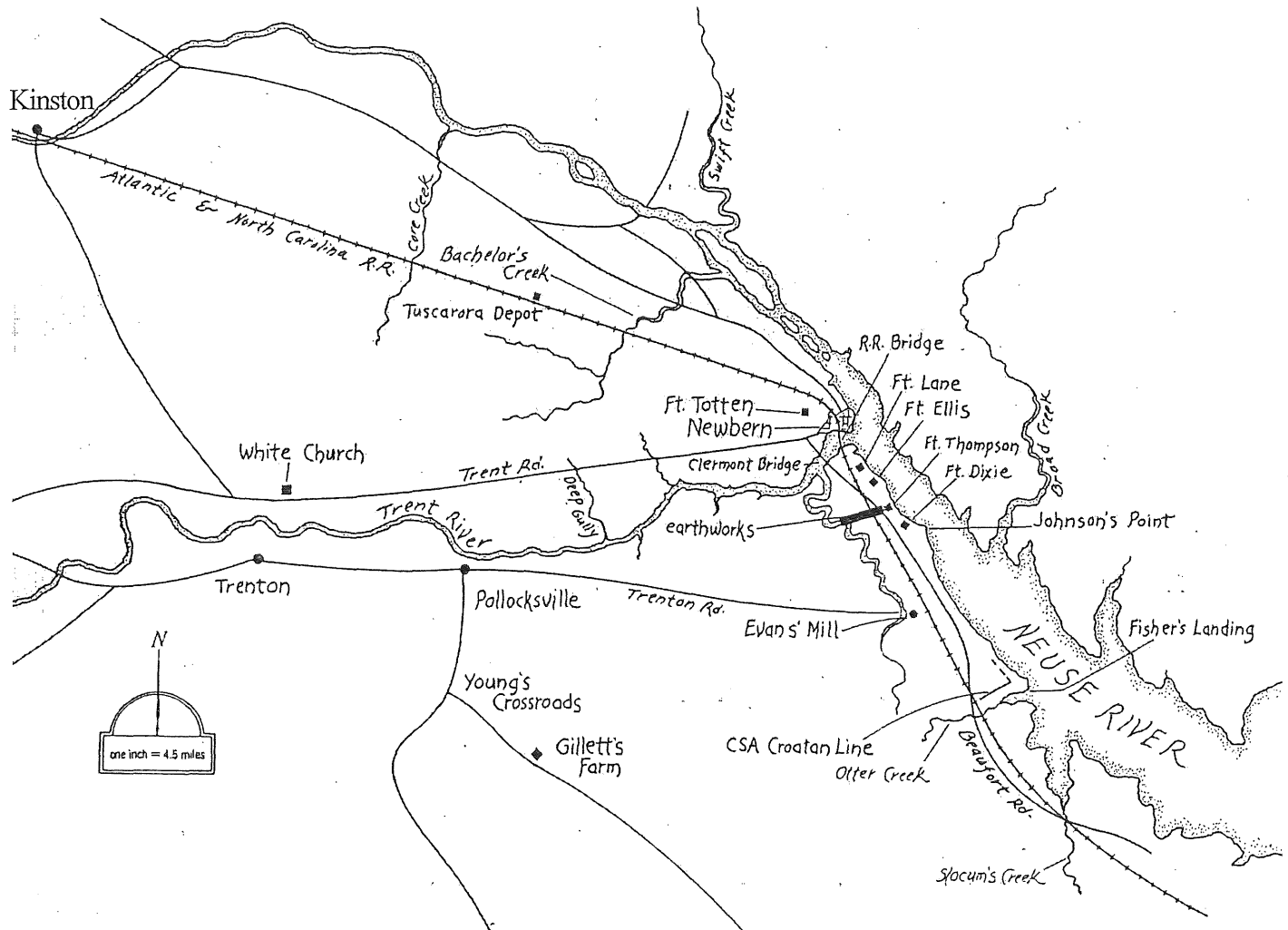


Figure 3: Map of New Bern Defenses, 1862

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any land-based attack on the city. They believed that any attack would be from the sea. There were almost no heavy guns guarding the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad, nor the old Beaufort Road.¹⁴

The Confederate defensive plan was riddled with flaws. Two of the most problematic were a lack of artillery to protect the land approaches to the city and a lack of manpower to man the fortifications south of New Bern. Confederate General Branch was counting on the residents in the area near the Croatan line to give him adequate warning of a Union landing so that he might rush troops to the line. He did receive warning, but crucial parts of the city's defenses were not completed before the Union army landed.

To add to Branch's woes was the decision he made in the sighting of the second line, the Fort Thompson Line, of earthworks, a decision which ultimately contributed to the outcome of the Battle of New Bern. The Confederates constructed a line of earthworks that stretched in straight line from Fort Thompson, on the Neuse River, to the North Carolina and Atlantic Railroad. The line was supposed to extend from the railroad to a swamp formed by Brice's Creek. Rather than running the line straight across as planned, Branch ordered a section of it dropped back 150 yards, north of the line east of the railroad tracks. He then anchored this second line on the tracks. This western segment of the line was not a continuous line of earthworks, here the engineers constructed a series a earthworks along a ridgeline north of Bullen's Branch.¹⁵

To compensate for the gap between the two lines, Branch ordered two 24-pounder artillery pieces be brought from New Bern and mounted in a position to command the railroad line. He further ordered that the brick-kiln in the Wood's Brickyard, on the east side of the railroad track, in the gap, be loopholed, that is, holes cut in the sides of the structure so that it could be used by his soldiers as part of the defensive line. These measures, if completed, would have greatly strengthened the Fort Thompson Line.¹⁶

The Battle of New Bern - Landing

Branch had soldiers at work improving the line when he received word that Burnside's fleet was on the Neuse. On the evening of March 12, 1862 the Union fleet was anchored off the mouth of Slocum's Creek, some fourteen miles south of New Bern. The Union solders were given orders to land the next morning. The landing was accomplished, with only minor problems. The Confederates offered no opposition and the Union forces were able to the remove the obstruction that had been placed at the mouth of the creek. Once this was accomplished the Federal soldiers began landing in force. The only

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real problem occurred when was one of the ships carrying part of Burnside's artillery ran aground. By 1 p.m. the Union troops were on the Carolina shore.¹⁷

Branch put his men into motion. His plan was to slow down the Union advance on New Bern in an effort to buy time, time which would allow him to finish the work at the Fort Thompson Line and for expected reinforcements to arrive. On the evening of March 12 the 35th North Carolina Infantry was ordered to Fisher's Landing, about three miles above Slocum's Creek. On March 13 Branch received reports from Colonel James Sinclair of the 35th North Carolina Infantry that Union troops were landing in force. Branch quickly ordered the 26th North Carolina Infantry south to man the Croatan Line.¹⁸

Around mid-morning Union gunboats moved up river and began to shell the Confederate position at Fisher's Creek. The 35th North Carolina Infantry withdrew to the wood line to avoid the Union naval fire. Finally, their commander ordered them back to the Fort Thompson Line. In the meantime, the 26th North Carolina continued to move south toward the Croatan Line but the Union forces were moving too quickly. The 26th North Carolina Infantry found itself in a position where it was exposed to a flanking movement by Federal forces. With no other options open they were forced to withdraw. The Confederate forces at Fort Dixie spiked the guns, that is, they disabled them so that they could not be used by the Union forces, and headed north. The Croatan Line was abandoned without a shot being fired. Burnside now held the Old Beaufort Road and could advance unchallenged to the Fort Thompson Line.¹⁹

Burnside's soldiers began marching north to New Bern. The only artillery Burnside had with him was a battery of six naval howitzers furnished by one of the ships. During the day of March 13 it began to rain. The roads became muddy, slowing the movement to a crawl. The advance from Slocum's Creek was a slow process. Finally, as the skies grew dark, Burnside ordered his soldiers to stop for the night. It rained all night, but in spite of the weather Burnside had gotten his infantry and some of his artillery in position in front of the Confederates at the Fort Thompson Line.²⁰

The Battle of New Bern

The early morning hours of March 14, 1862 were cold, damp and foggy. The Union expeditionary force was just south of the Fort Thompson Line. General Branch also had his troops in position. The Confederate order of battle, listed from east to west, was as follows: the 27th North Carolina Infantry, under the command of Major John A. Gilmer, anchored the line, his east flank touching Fort

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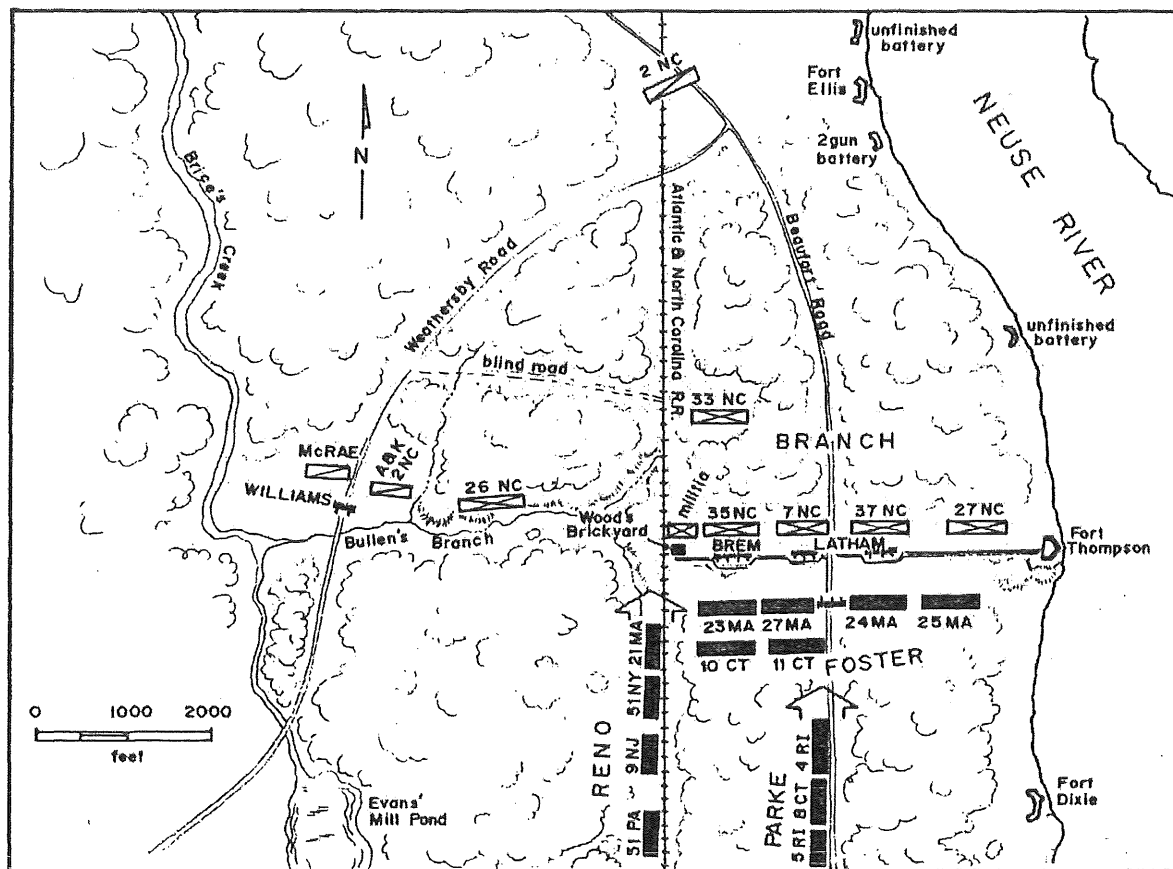


Figure 4: Battle of New Bern, position of Union and Confederate troops March 14, 1862

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Thompson. To his west, the 37th North Carolina Infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel William M. Barbour, the 7th North Carolina Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Edward G. Haywood and Colonel James Sinclair's 35th North Carolina Infantry, extended to the railroad track. In the brickyard, in the gap of the line, was local militia under Colonel H. J. Clark. Across the railroad, in the works on the ridges above the creek, was the 26th North Carolina Infantry under Colonel Zebulon B. Vance. Vance's regiment was supported by an independent infantry company under Captain McRae and companies A and B of the 2nd North Carolina Cavalry, fighting dismounted. The 33rd North Carolina Infantry under Colonel C. M. Avery was in reserve. There were two pieces of artillery on the west side of railroad and ten pieces on the east side.²¹

Burnside lined up his troops and prepared to attack the Confederate position. He was unsure what he was facing, but confident that he could win. Burnside's forces were in three brigades, one under the command of General John Gray Foster whose troops were to be placed on the east, a second under General James Lee Reno, whose troops were to move to the west and a third under General John Grubb Parke, in the middle. Foster's troops were placed in line of battle east of the railroad. The 24th Massachusetts Infantry was on the extreme east end of the line with the 25th Massachusetts Infantry. Artillery was placed to the west of the 24th Massachusetts Infantry. To the west of the artillery were the 27th and the 23rd Massachusetts Infantry, the latter with its west flank on the railroad track. The 10th and 11th Connecticut Infantry were also under Foster's command and were sent into line after the fighting began. Reno's second brigade of soldiers, the 21st Massachusetts Infantry, 51st New York Infantry, 9th New Jersey Infantry and 51st Pennsylvania Infantry, were ordered to advance up the railroad line (see Figure 4).²²

The battle began about 7:30 a.m. on March 14, 1862 when a Confederate 12-pounder, attached to the 37th North Carolina Infantry, fired at the Union line. Without waiting for Reno or Parke to come up, General Foster attacked the east flank of the Confederate line. Foster opened up with his artillery and the Confederate batteries responded in kind. The battle on the east of the railroad track became general. Initially, the 25th Massachusetts Infantry on the end of the Union line took the brunt of the attack. The Confederate artillery in the line and from Fort Thompson, and the added fire of Union gunboats hit the 25th Massachusetts Infantry, eventually forcing them to shift to the west.²³

The Confederate position here was quite strong. Foster's brigade got nowhere and his artillery quickly exhausted the meager ammunition which had been hauled from Slocum's Creek. The Confederate field artillery, as well as the three guns from Fort Thompson, fired accurately on the advancing Union soldiers. On this (east) side of the line the earthworks were well prepared. In addition to a strong

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earthwork, Branch had created a long barrier of abatis consisting of downed trees and brush which proved a formidable obstacle. The regiments under Foster, which soon included the 10th and 11th Connecticut Infantry, sought whatever cover they could find and settled for returning the fire of the Confederates.²⁴

While Foster was stalemated, General Jesse L. Reno moved his four regiments up the railroad to attack the Confederates west of track. As Reno's Union troops were preparing to move on the Confederate right flank (west) General Branch ordered a company of artillerists from Fort Thompson to the brickyard, to mount two 24-pounder guns that had been sent there by railroad to be mounted on a prepared earthwork. If these guns had been put into operation the battle may have ended differently. The area where these guns were to be mounted was in the sag in the Confederate line. This was the area where the Confederate line was 150 yards further north than the line east of the railroad. Here, at his weakest point, Branch had placed his militia, a choice which would prove fatal.²⁵

The 21st Massachusetts Infantry pushed up the railroad between the Confederate line on the east and the brickyard to the west. Several companies of the 21st Massachusetts Infantry, led by General Reno, charged the Confederate militia in the brickyard. The militia was quickly scattered and the artillerists driven off; the guns would not be mounted to meet the Union attack. By entering the brickyard Reno's soldiers were able to fire at the 35th North Carolina Infantry which was anchoring the eastern end of the Fort Thompson line. At first, Reno's men were successful. But, quickly, the Confederates shifted a portion of the 37th North Carolina Infantry and brought up their reserve, the 33rd North Carolina Infantry, and were able to push the Union troops out of the brickyard.²⁶

The Union advance had stalled. Foster's brigade was stalemated on the east side of the railroad track. Reno, while initially successful, was now pinned down around the brickyard. At this moment, the third brigade of Burnside's army finally made an appearance. General John G. Parke's command had been placed in reserve between the two flanks of the Union line so that it might quickly provide help where it was needed most. As a portion of Reno's men were reforming for a second attack on the brickyard, the 4th Rhode Island Infantry arrived. They joined in the attack on the brickyard and the assault began to make headway. Colonel Isaac P. Rodman, of the 4th Rhode Island Infantry, sent word to General Parke who sent the remainder of his brigade into the fray. The 8th Connecticut Infantry and the 5th Rhode Island Infantry of Parke's brigade also hit the Confederate center. The results were devastating.²⁷

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The renewed pressure of the Federal assault was too much for the beleaguered Confederate defenders. Once the Union forces breached the Confederate center the ends of the lines were untenable. As Union troops poured through the center General Foster ordered his men on the east side of the railroad to charge the Confederate entrenchments. The Confederate left (east of the railroad) disintegrated. The defenders began to withdraw toward New Bern. General Branch had no more troops to replace them and all he could do was to organize the retreat. West of the railroad, Colonels Vance and Avery, unaware of what was happening to their east, continued to fight Reno's advancing Union soldiers until Noon. At that time, word reached Colonel Vance that the Federals had breached the brickyard and were firing down his exposed flank. Vance and Avery had little choice, if they stood their ground they would be cut off from the rest of the Confederate army and would either be annihilated or captured. Vance ordered his troops back to New Bern.²⁸

The Battle of New Bern raged for five hours before the overwhelming numbers of the Union army breached the Confederate line and crushed any hopes the Confederacy had of holding North Carolina's second largest city. Burnside had some 10,000 men with him while New Bern was defended by less than 5,000. While General Lawrence O'Bryan Branch had tried to get the defenses of the city prepared, he was hampered by lack of manpower, lack of artillery and a lack of real concern from the Confederate government in Richmond, which focused all of its energies and resources on protecting the capitol. The fall of New Bern would be contested by the Confederates over the course of the war but it would remain in Union hands. Once Burnside had secured New Bern he launched attacks at South Mills, Trantors Creek and Fort Macon. By summer eastern North Carolina and the outer banks were firmly in Union control, only Wilmington eluded the Federal forces until late in the war.²⁹

Endnotes

¹ Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, (National Park Service, Washington, DC, 1993), p. 41 and 50.

² Peter M. Chaitin, *The Coastal War: Chesapeake Bay to Rio Grande*, (Alexandria, VA, 1984), pp. 16-17.

³ Ibid.

⁴ T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, (New York, 1952), pp. 24-31 and 42-43.

⁵ John G. Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, NC, 1963), pp. 66-67.

⁶ William Marvel, *Burnside*, (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991), pp. 40-59.

⁷ Barrett, *Civil War*, p. 63 and 74.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 73-74 and Marvel, *Burnside*, pp. 51-52.

⁹ Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Volume I*, (New York, 1887), pp. 640-642.

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¹⁰ Marvel, *Burnside*, pp. 55-61.

¹¹ Barrett, *Civil War*, pp. 85-89.

¹² Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray*, (Baton Rouge, 1959), p. 31 and Richard A. Sauers, "A Series of Honorable Victories: The Burnside's 1862 North Carolina Campaign," Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1987, p. 287.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁵ Sauers, *Victories*, p. 311.

¹⁶ Barrett, *Civil War*, p. 97 and Sauers, *Victories*, p. 311

¹⁷ Johnson and Buel, *Battles and Leaders*, p. 668 and Sauers, *Victories*, p. 291.

¹⁸ Sauers, *Victories*, pp. 315-316 and Barrett, *Civil War*, p. 99.

¹⁹ Richard A. Sauers and William D. Gorges, *The Battle of New Bern and related sites in Craven County, N.C., 1861-1865*, (New Bern, NC, 1994), p. 11.

²⁰ *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Record of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. 9*, (Washington, DC, 1880-1900), p. 217. All citations from this source are from the same Series and Volume and will hereafter be cited as O.R. and Augustus Woodbury, *Ambrose E. Burnside and the Ninth Army Corps*, (Providence, RI, 1867), p. 57.

²¹ Barrett, *Civil War*, pp. 99-100.

²² O.R. pp. 212 and 221; Johnson and Buel, *Battles and Leaders*, p. 669 and Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue*, (Baton Rouge, 1964), pp. 158, 359 and 394.

²³ Barrett, *Civil War*, p. 100 and O.R., pp. 212-213.

²⁴ Marvel, *Burnside*, p. 72 and Richard Iobst, *Battle of New Bern*, (Raleigh, NC, ND), p. 9.

²⁵ Sauers, "A Series", pp. 333-334 and Barrett, *Civil War*, p. 100.

²⁶ Chaitin, *The Coastal War*, pp. 36-37; Alan D. Watson, *A History of New Bern and Craven County*, (New Bern, NC, 1987), p. 378 and Sauers, "A Series", p. 341.

²⁷ Woodbury, *Ninth Corps*, pp. 60-61 and Sauers, "A Series", pp. 346-347-353.

²⁸ O.R., pp. 255-256 and 260-261; Barrett, *Civil War*, pp. 104-105; Chaitin, *Coastal War*, p. 37 and Sauers, "A Series", pp. 353-359.

²⁹ John Gilchrist Barrett, *North Carolina as a Civil War Battleground*, (Raleigh, NC, 1987), pp. 35-43.

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New Bern Battlefield Site

Craven Co., NC

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_____. *Generals in Gray*. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA., 1959.

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New Bern Battlefield Site

Craven Co., NC

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Woodbury, Augustus. *Ambrose E. Burnside and the Ninth Army Corps*. Sidney S. Rider & Brother, Providence, RI, 1867.

Section 10

UTM points continued

- 5. 18 E 316220 N 3879880
- 6. 18 E 316480 N 3879290
- 7. 18 E 316020 N 3879250
- 8. 18 E 315660 N 3879420
- 9. 18 E 315640 N 3879640
- 10. 18 E 316480 N 3879720
- 11. 18 E 316780 N 3880020

Verbal Boundary Description

The New Bern Battlefield Site consists of two discontinuous sites. The first is on the east side of US 70 and is referred to as "The line east of the railroad." The second is west of US 70 and is referred to as "The Confederate line and battleground west of US 70." These two parcels are described below and are marked on two 1"=200' maps that are attached.

1) The line east of the railroad

This segment of the New Bern Battlefield Site consists of the most intact portion of what was historically known as the "Fort Thompson Line." The Fort Thompson Line was a line of earthworks which ran east to west, from Fort Thompson on the Neuse River to the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. The approximately one acre portion of this line which is nominated is a section of the original earthworks which begins in a wooded area just east of US 70 and runs in a straight east/west line for 1,500 feet. It is bound on the south by the Jaycees fairgrounds and on the north by the backs of

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the lots of seven houses constructed in the 1960s and a vacant lot which are along Bradford Drive. This parcel is thirty feet wide.

2) The Confederate line and battlefield west of US 70

This portion of the battlefield is approximately ninety-eight acres and contains the remains of Wood's Brickyard and the line constructed by Confederate engineers along a series of ridges north of Bullen's Branch. It is in this portion of the battlefield that the Union army broke through the Confederate line and secured victory. On the north, the site is defined by a property line that runs approximately 1300 feet due west from a point on the Norfolk Southern Railroad right of way, 736 feet south of Taberna Way. The line turns southwest and follows the fifteen foot contour line crossing Bullen's Branch and extends to the toe of a ridge approximately 500 feet southwest of a wetland. Here the boundary follows the fifteen foot contour line southeast before swinging to the south approximately 1,000 feet, then extending east in a straight line to the west side of the Atlantic and East Carolina right of way. The line follows the right of way north approximately 2,000 feet. Here just as the railroad crosses Bullen's Branch, the line extends to the east 200 feet halfway across a vacant lot. It then proceeds north 390 feet and then back to the east 200 feet, to the railroad right of way. The boundary then follows the western right of way of the Norfolk Southern Railroad north approximately 250 feet north to the intersection with the rthern boundary line. See Figure 1 and the 1"=200' map that is attached.

Boundary Justification

These two discontinuous areas were chosen for nomination because they are the best preserved remaining areas of the battlefield and together they demonstrate the vast area of the defensive line which the Confederate forces were trying to defend.

1) The line east of the railroad

This one acre long narrow section of earthworks was chosen for inclusion in this nomination because it is the best preserved section of the "Fort Thompson Line," that section of the Confederate defensive line which ran from Fort Thompson on the Neuse River west to the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad. This 1,500 foot section retains its integrity and is clearly recognizable as a Civil War earthwork. It is located in a wooded area and thus buffered from the twentieth century intrusions which surround it. The trench line is located along the rear of eight suburban lots which front Bradford Drive. Due to the dense vegetation which surrounds this remnant it is screened from the houses to the north, the fairgrounds to the south, US 70 to the west and Old Cherry Point Road to the east. See Figure 1 and the attached 1"=200' map.

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2) The Confederate line and battleground west of US 70

This ninety-eight acre section is the best preserved part of the battlefield. It includes earthworks, both infantry trenches and redans, erected by the Confederate forces to defend the western end of their line, and a portion of the railroad track. Although the railroad has been updated and has a different name, it is still follows the same alignment as the railroad which ran through the battlefield in 1862. Unlike the site to the east, this section also contains the Union army approaches to the battlefield. In essence, this is the most significant portion of the battlefield. This is the area where the Union army broke through the Confederate lines, ultimately forcing them to retreat and abandon New Bern. The landscape clearly demonstrates why the earthworks were constructed in the first place.

Bullen's Branch flows through this portion of the battlefield and the low swampy terrain which the Confederate defenders were counting on to stop the Union forces from getting around their western flank is readily seen here. The site is bound on the north, south and west by suburban residential development and on the east by commercial development. This relatively unaltered site is the best remaining portion of the New Bern Battlefield Site. See Figure 1 and the attached 1"=200' map.

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New Bern Battlefield Site

Craven Co., NC

Property Owners

Weyerhauser
PO Box 1391
New Bern, NC 28563
parcel # 7-104-SCTC-2001

New Bern Historical Society
PO Box 119
New Bern, NC 28563
parcel # 7-300 -002

Calvary Baptist Church
PO Box 1089
New Bern, NC 28563
parcel # 7-026- 001

Naomi Glasscock
2015 Wake Forest Road
Raleigh, NC 27608
parcel # 7-056-SCT2-001

Mark Chistopher and Melanie Rhodes
421 Bradford Drive
New Bern, NC 28560
parcel # 7-056-SCT2-002

David Allen Millis
419 Bradford Drive
New Bern, NC 28560
parcel # 7-056-SCT3-003

James B. and Linnie R. Land
PO Box 209
New Bern, NC 28563
parcel # 7-056-SCT2-004

Parker, Floyd Jr. and Margaret B.
413 Bradford Drive
New bern, NC 28560
parcel # 7-056-2CT2-006

Raymond Joseph Schiller
415 Bradford Drive
New Bern, NC 28560
parcel # 7-056-SCT2-005

Otis V., Jr. and Lois W. Whitfield
411 Bradford Drive
New Bern, NC 28560
parcel # 7-056-SCT2-007

Robert A and Bryan Strickland
PO Box 3456
New Bern, NC 28564
parcel # 7-028-004

Norfolk Southern Corporation
Three Commercial Place
Norfolk, VA 23510

Thomas and Sophronia Stevens
4047 US Highway 70 E
New Bern, NC 28562
parcel # 7-109-001

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New Bern Battlefield Site

Craven Co., NC

The following information pertains to each of the photographs

Name of Property: New Bern Battlefield Site

Location: East and west of US 70E approx. 4.5 miles southeast of New Bern, North Carolina.

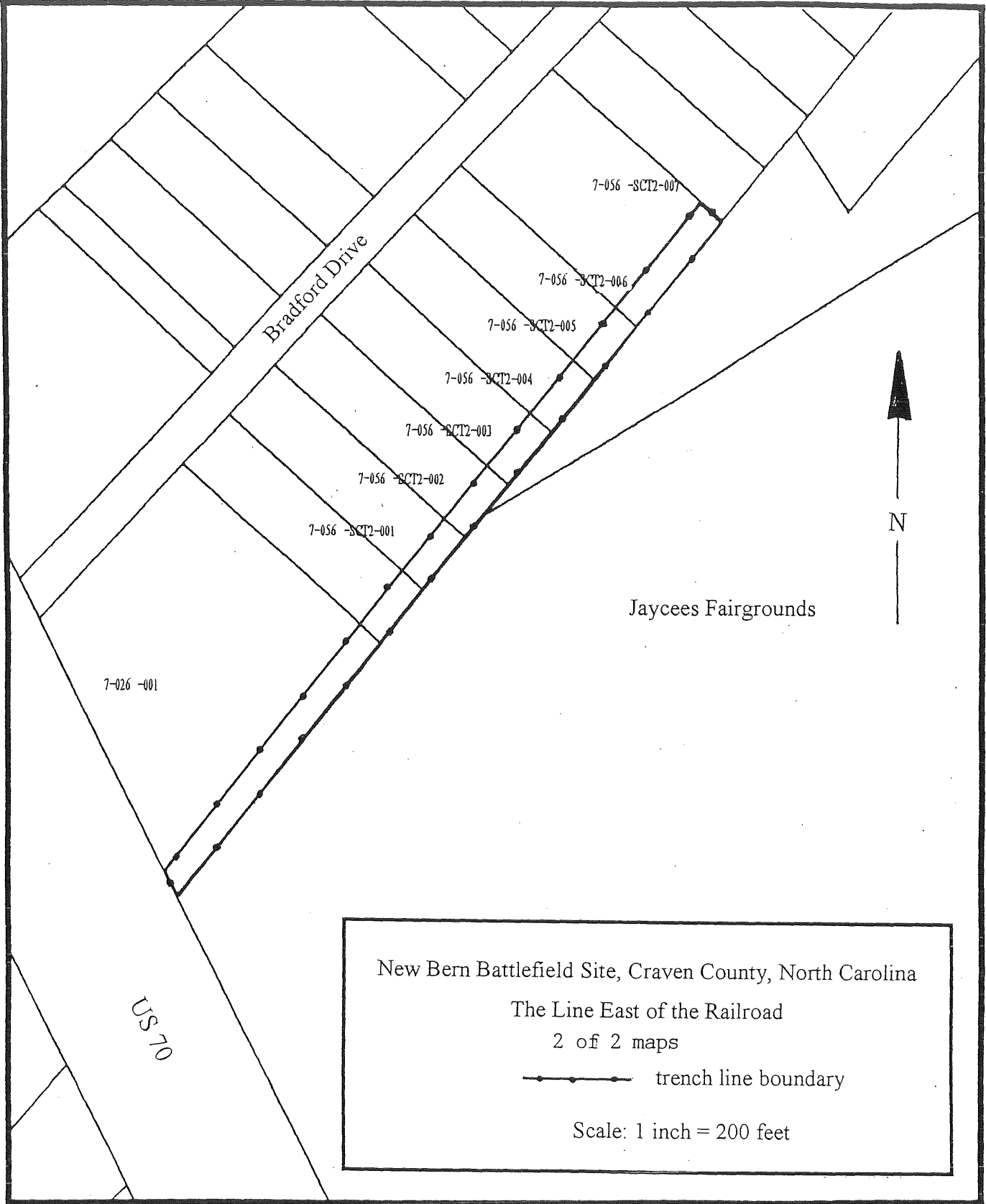
County: Craven

Name of Photographer: Joseph E. Brent

Location of Negatives: Survey and Planning Branch
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
109 E. Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

Date of Photographs: January 2001

- A. Earthworks north of Jaycees Fairgrounds looking east
- B. Earthworks north of Jaycees Fairgrounds looking east
- C. Earthworks on the eastern end of the line west of the railroad tracks looking west
- D. Redan above Bullen's Branch looking west with man for scale
- E. Norfolk Southern railroad looking north
- F. Area of Woods Brickyard looking east
- G. Jaycess Fairground in foreground the area with the earthworks are beyond the treeline in the left of the photograph looking east.



Bradford Drive

7-056 -SCT2-007

7-056 -SCT2-006

7-056 -SCT2-005

7-056 -SCT2-004

7-056 -SCT2-003

7-056 -SCT2-002

7-056 -SCT2-001

7-026 -001

Jaycees Fairgrounds



US 70

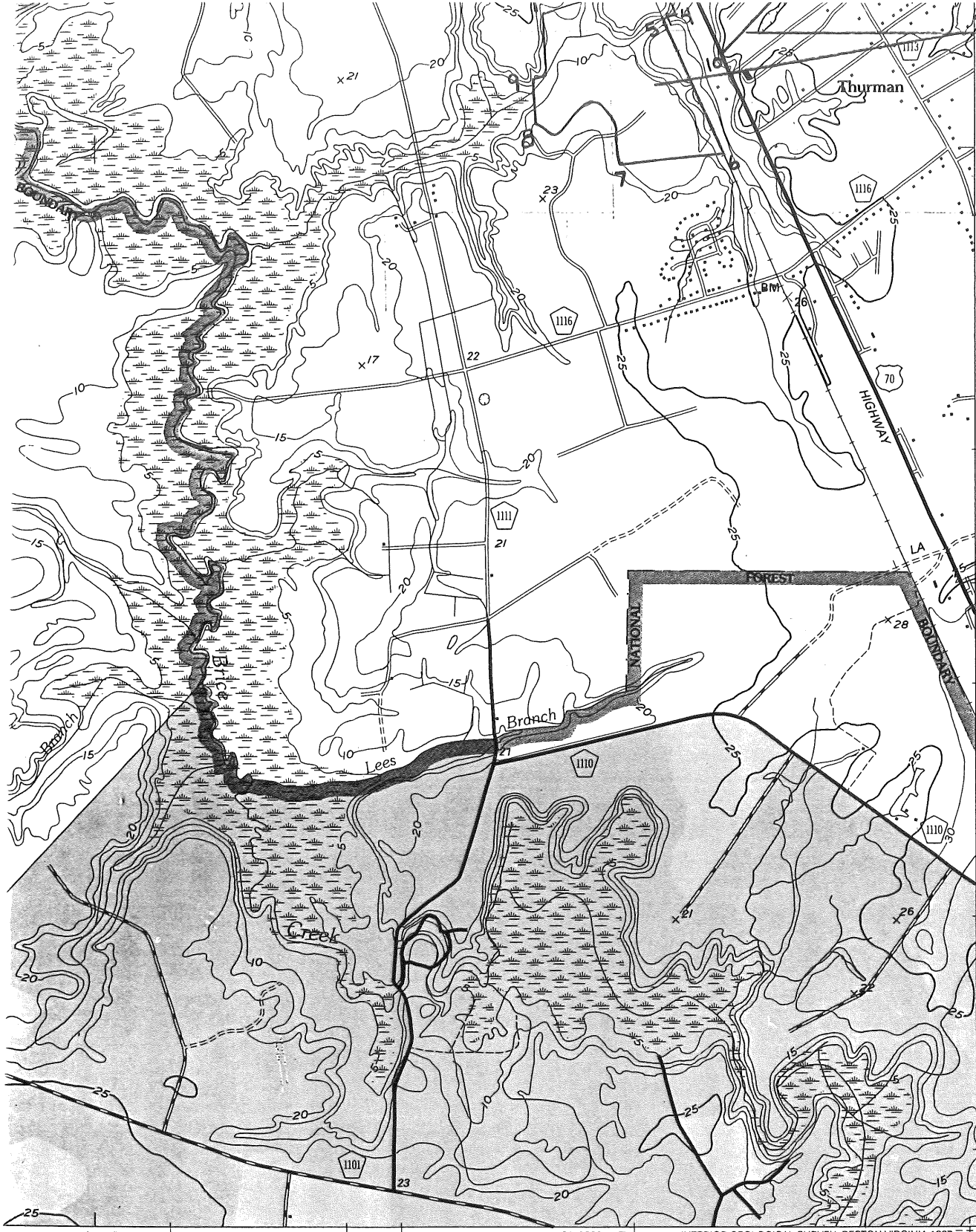
New Bern Battlefield Site, Craven County, North Carolina
The Line East of the Railroad
2 of 2 maps
trench line boundary
Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet

New Bern
Battlefield Site
Craven County,
North Carolina

02' 30"

UTM References

- 3879
- 1 18/315710/3879880
- 2 18/316160/3880100
- 3 18/316260/3879980
- 4 18/316280/3879900
- 5 18/316220/3879880
- 6 18/316480/3879290
- 7 18/316020/3879250
- 8 18/315660/3879420
- 3878
- 9 18/315640/3879640
- 10 18/316480/3879720
- 11 18/316780/3880020

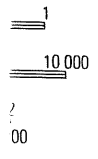


3877

3876

3875000 m N

02' 30' 314 315 316000 m E. INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON VIRGINIA-1997 35° 00' 77° 00'



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Jasper
			2 Askin
			3 Reelsboro
4		5	4 Pollocksville
			5 Upper Broad Creek
			6 Maysville
6	7	8	7 Catfish Lake

- Interstate [5]
- U. S. [101]
- State [79]
- County [6]
- National Forest, suitable for passenger cars [105]
- National Forest, suitable for high clearance vehicles [61]
- National Forest Trail [105]

- Primary highway [thick solid line]
- Secondary highway [medium solid line]
- Light-duty road
- Paved [thin solid line]
- Gravel [dashed line]
- Dirt [dotted line]
- Composition unspecified ... [dotted line]
- Unimproved; 4 wheel drive [dotted line with 4WD]
- Trail [dashed line]
- Gate [short horizontal line]

NEW BERN, N. C.

