

On May 20, 1861 North Carolina seceded from the Union. Recognizing the importance of the Outer Banks, especially Hatteras Inlet, the most navigable inlet along the North Carolina coast, the Confederate Army immediately established several forts there.

Fort Hatteras was located at Hatteras Inlet near Pamlico Sound. Fort Clark was situated about one half mile to the southeast, closer to the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to maintaining Confederate access to Pamlico Sound and mainland ports, Hatteras Inlet, which had opened in 1846 and quickly surpassed Ocracoke Inlet in importance, was the most convenient point from which to mount attacks on unarmed Federal ships.

Construction of an earthwork fort was also begun on Beacon Island, near Ocracoke Inlet, between Ocracoke and Portsmouth Island.

On the morning of August 28, 1861 superior Federal forces in gunboats offshore opened fire on Fort Clark. Neither Fort Clark nor Fort Hatteras was very strong or well equipped. By noon the Confederate soldiers had abandoned their stations. Early the next day Federal troops bombarded Fort Hatteras. After intense shelling they landed and captured the fort. Seven hundred defenders surrendered. It was the first Civil War victory for the Union. However, Confederate forces still controlled Ocracoke Inlet to the south, and Albemarle Sound and Roanoke Island farther north.

Fort Hatteras:



In mid September United States Marines, in two warships accompanied by two tugs,

proceeded to Fort Ocracoke. They found the fort, which had never been fully operational, abandoned, and the guns spiked. The marines gathered the guns and flammable materials together, then packed gunpowder around them, and blew up the fort. From Beacon Island the marines sailed to Portsmouth where they disabled a four-gun Confederate battery.

In October, 1861 Confederate troops from Roanoke Island landed on Hatteras Island, intent on recapturing the Outer Banks. At Chicamacomico (now the village of Rodanthe), forty miles north of the inlet, they encountered a Union outpost. Confederate forces began their attack, driving the Federal troops down the beach toward Hatteras Inlet. At nightfall, the exhausted Union forces camped at the Hatteras Lighthouse. The Confederates stopped at Kinnakeet (now the village of Avon).

Early the next morning the Confederate troops abandoned their attack, turned around, and proceeded north. Advancing Federal soldiers from Fort Hatteras caught up with them, and pursued the rebels back to Chicamacomico. In spite of gunfire on both land and sea, there were few casualties on either side. Confederate forces returned to Roanoke Island, and Union forces returned to Fort Hatteras. The "Chicamacomico Races" as this encounter came to be known, did not change the balance of power on the Outer Banks.

Confederate forces held Roanoke Island until February, 1862. On February 7 - 8 Union troops under command of Brigadier General Ambrose Burnside stormed the island's earthwork fortresses and overwhelmed the defenders. With the surrender of the Confederates on Roanoke Island, the port cities of Plymouth, Elizabeth City, New Bern, Washington, Edenton, and Hertford, as well as Norfolk, Va., soon fell. By June almost all of eastern North Carolina had fallen under Union control.

Only the North Carolina port of Wilmington remained in Confederate hands...until February, 1865, just three months before the end of the war.

Washington, North Carolina fell to federal troops in the spring of 1862. Uncertainty reigned for the next three years. Confederate forces attempted to retake the city in September, 1862 but failed after a fierce battle. Smaller skirmishes erupted in the spring of 1863, but Washington remained under Federal control until spring of 1864.

On April 30, 1864 Union forces began evacuating the city. In order to prevent supplies from falling into the hands of the Confederates they set fire to naval stores along the waterfront. In the process a raging fire consumed much of downtown Washington reducing many residential areas to charred embers. Washington remained under Confederate control until November of 1864.

Living in Washington when the city was burned was Josephus Daniels, Sr. (1828-1865), his wife Mary, and their two sons, Franklin Arthur Daniels (b. 1858) and Josephus Daniels, Jr. (1862-1948). Josephus, Sr. ("Jody" to friends) was the grandson of Thomas Daniels, an Irish Protestant who settled on Roanoke Island at the end of the Revolutionary War. Thomas' son, Clifford, moved to Bay River where he was engaged in farming and building coastal schooners. Josephus carried on the family tradition. He was a shipbuilder who worked in the Navy yard at Wilmington.

During the war Josephus outfitted Confederate ships to serve as blockade runners. In spite of this activity, Daniels was a Whig and a vocal Union sympathizer. He was known as a vigorous opponent of the war, and was stigmatized as a "buffalo" (a white resident of eastern North Carolina who supported the Union cause) (1)

In the spring of 1864 Jody Daniels carried his wife and two sons to Ocracoke as a refuge from the chaos and dangers of Washington, North Carolina. A third son, Charles Cleaves Daniels, was born on Ocracoke September 23, 1864 in a modest wood frame house across the lane from where the Community Store is located today.

At some point during the war Confederate authorities provided Josephus with a pass that allowed him to trade within the Union occupied zone. He traveled back and forth across the sound, both to carry on business and to visit with his family.

Because of his Union sympathies Daniels was killed by Confederate sharpshooters on January 28, 1865 while on a ship carrying non-combatants between Ocracoke and Washington.

Shortly after her husband's death and the end of the Civil War, Mary Daniels moved her family from Ocracoke to Wilson, North Carolina. There she started a small dress-making business, and soon secured the job of postmaster, a position she held for many years. Her three sons worked odd jobs to supplement the family income.

When he was a teenager Josephus Daniels, Jr. obtained work in a print shop. For most of the rest of his life he was involved in the newspaper business. He served as editor of a local paper when he was just sixteen. By the time he was eighteen years old he had purchased a regional paper. At twenty he and his brother Charles, who would later become Assistant US Attorney General, established the *Free Press* in Kinston, North Carolina. Josephus used their paper as a vehicle to promote his political views.

Daniels enrolled in law school at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and was

admitted to the bar, but he never practiced law. Over the next decade he owned and published several newspapers, and worked both for the state of North Carolina (as Printer-for-the-State) and for the US Department of the Interior.

In 1895 Daniels purchased the *Raleigh News & Observer*, and merged it with two of his other papers. Never one to shy away from controversial issues, Josephus Daniels was fond of saying that “dullness is the only crime for which an editor ought to be hung.” His *News & Observer* followed this philosophy and “embodied the complexity of Democratic Party politics in early 20th-century North Carolina.”(2)

Although Daniels campaigned for many progressive causes, including improved public education, anti-trust legislation, a graduated income tax, women’s suffrage, and regulation of railroads, he was also a strong advocate of draconian Jim Crow laws designed to restrict the rights of southern blacks. His newspaper helped launch a White Supremacy campaign that contributed to the overthrow of the elected government of Wilmington, North Carolina on November 10, 1898, and North Carolina Democratic Party victories in the election of 1898. (3)

In 2006 the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Office of Archives and History released its “1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report.” Among other findings, the report notes that:

1. The racial violence of November 10, 1898, in Wilmington precipitated an armed overthrow of the legitimately elected municipal government.
2. The organizers of the overthrow took part in a documented conspiracy. The leaders, member of the Democratic white elite in Wilmington and New Hanover County, achieved their political goals through violence and intimidation.
3. Involved in the conspiracy were men prominent in the Democratic Party, former Confederate officers, former officeholders, and newspaper editors locally and statewide rallied by Josephus Daniels of the *Raleigh News and Observer*. (4)

According to Jonathan Worth Daniels, his father’s passion for the disenfranchisement of southern blacks was stoked when Josephus’ mother, Mary Daniels, was removed as Wilson, North Carolina postmaster by George Henry White, the last African American Congressman of the Reconstruction Era. White served as Representative of North Carolina’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District from 1897-1901. Josephus Daniels approached White, asking that his mother be reinstated, but White refused. (5) This confrontation undoubtedly

led to Daniels' editorial rhetoric about "Negro Domination," and eventually to the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot.

In 1912 Josephus Daniels vigorously promoted Woodrow Wilson for the presidency. After Wilson's election the President appointed Daniels Secretary of the Navy, a post he held from 1913, through World War I, and until 1921. Daniels appointed Franklin Delano Roosevelt his Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Although Daniels had little experience in naval matters, he managed to institute a number of reforms, including the establishment of vocational training for enlisted men and the elimination of much corruption in military contracts. He also established the Naval Consulting Board chaired by Thomas A. Edison. A devout Methodist and teetotaler, Daniels antagonized Navy brass when he banned all alcoholic beverages on ships and in Navy yards. In lieu of spirits, sailors were offered coffee, which came to be known as a "cup of joe" in honor of Secretary Daniels.

Josephus Daniels, Jr.:



In 1933 Daniels supported his one-time assistant, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for president. On his election Roosevelt reciprocated the favor by appointing Daniels Ambassador to Mexico. In the eight years he served as ambassador Daniels succeeded in winning the admiration of the President as well as the citizens of Mexico. Josephus Daniels resigned as Ambassador to Mexico in 1941, when his son Jonathan was appointed as Special Assistant to President Roosevelt. Daniels returned to the *News & Observer*.

In his later years Daniels admitted to regretting his earlier tactics as an advocate for White Supremacy, and put his energy into more progressive causes such as supporting workers compensation laws and anti child labor laws.

Today, only a few Ocracoke residents are aware that Josephus Daniels spent time living on Ocracoke in his youth.

- (1) [http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/A-0313/excerpts/excerpt\\_5865.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/A-0313/excerpts/excerpt_5865.html)
- (2) <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/raleigh/dan.htm>
- (3) <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/1898/history.html>
- (4) <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/1898/history.html>
- (5) [http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/A-0313/excerpts/excerpt\\_5865.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/A-0313/excerpts/excerpt_5865.html)