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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC BLOCKADING SQUADRON:
THE DIARY OF JAMES W. BOYNTON

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The writer of this diary, James Boynton, was born into an old Massachusetts family in 1826 and was raised in the Andover-Lowell-Tewksbury region northwest of Boston. He was college-educated (believed to be at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge) and thereafter entered his profession as a private engineer. When the war broke out in 1861, Boynton, like so many northerners from the older families, was idealistically motivated to serve the Union cause. At age 36, however, he was reluctant to subject himself to the physical hardships of battlefield service. Hence, he applied for a navy commission so that he could contribute his engineering skills in a meaningful capacity without subjecting himself to battlefield stress.

Boynton's service with DuPont's squadron was rewarding, but he suffered poor health while aboard the *Conemaugh.* He was evidently dissatisfied with the lack of medical attention, and most of his diary is devoted to describing in great detail his illness. The unhealthy conditions took a severe toll aboard the blockading ships. After contracting what appears to be pleurisy, Boynton was detached from the *Conemaugh* on March 24, 1863. He was subsequently condemned by a medical survey aboard the *Vermont,* sent home aboard the transport *Arago,* and discharged as an invalid on April 16, 1863. Returning to private life, he later became associated with the early development of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company.

Boynton's diary, from which these excerpts are taken, was rewritten while convalescing, serving perhaps as a personal justification for his abbreviated wartime service. Upon his death the diary passed unnoticed in a trunk with other family papers through four generations, being discovered by this editor in 1972.

On May 22, 1862 I received a warrant from the Navy Department as Third Assistant Engineer. I was ordered to report for passage from New York aboard the *U.S.S. Massachusetts* to join Admiral Dupont's squadron at Port Royal, South Carolina. On August 4th I reported to

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something that went beyond mere events and personalities. It was the whole question of the relationship between Church and State as imposed on Carolina:

> Thus we see with what Views to the State this Act was past. And indeed I scarse believe any body ever thought that this Act in Carolina, or a Bill of a like Nature here was ever designed for the good of the State; which all narrowing and secluding Laws must necessarily weaken and enervate. Thus a society which some men call the Church, is set up as a Corporation within ourselves whose Interest is directly inconsistent with the Good of the State; at the same time that it is thought superior to that of the State. But they might easily have seen that such an Act as that would have put the Church, as it is a distinct society from the State, into almost as great a Danger as the State itself. For when a Tyrannical Power is once established, the very Men that established it have no security that they shan't be the first that shall feel its dire effects.[11]

As a matter of fact, Defoe pointed out, the first victim of the establishment law was the Anglican rector of St. Philip's who opposed the total control of the Church by the State in South Carolina.

Queen Anne returned a favorable answer to the address; and, on the advice of her ministers, referred the matter to the Lords of the Committee of Trade, who reported on May 24, 1706 that the Exclusion Act was altogether illegal—an abuse of the Charter and a forfeiture thereof. This was followed by a Declaration of her Majesty on June 10, 1706, that such Law was "Null and Void". The Proprietors were forced to order Governor Johnson to retrace his steps, and new elections without religious restrictions were ordered for the Carolina Commons House of Assembly. On April 9, 1709, Colonel Edward Tynte replaced Sir Nathaniel Johnson as Governor of the Carolinas.

This Parliamentary hearing marked the last time in the eighteenth century that a major effort was made to disfranchise a legislative body in an American colony by means of a religious test. Sir Nathaniel Johnson retired with accolades from his many friends to his South Carolina plantation. Joseph Boone's life was threatened upon his return to Charleston, but his fight for political and religious liberty was won. Daniel Defoe turned his attention to other issues including the union of England and Scotland, and to his literary works, *Moll Flanders* and *A Political History of the Devil.* Yet Daniel Defoe's contribution to South Carolina's colonial history was not forgotten, though, as far as is known, he never visited or corresponded again with the people he had helped to defend in Britain's highest tribunal.

[11] *Ibid.*, 23.

Commander R. Werden aboard the *U.S.S. Conemaugh* which lay within twenty rods of the flagship *Warbash.* The ship was assigned to blockade duty at the mouth of the Savannah River. We left for our station at about 3 P. M. that day.[1]

View From the Engine Room

From my experience as an engineer in civilian life, I was shocked at the condition of the engine room. The engine room was on a level with the boilers and poorly ventilated. A partition between the engine room and the boilers about one-half the height of the room allowed the hot air to pass directly through the engine room from the boilers. There was a second partition over the cylinder about 10 feet from the boiler room partition. The hot air thus passed over the top of the boiler room partition, under the second partition, across the engine room and directly to where the engineer or officer on duty was obliged to stand to work his engine.

Thus, when the ship lay before the wind or was held there by a strong tide, as was the *Conemaugh* and all vessels that lay in the Southern rivers, the draft of air coming in the boiler room hatch took with it all the heat from that room and pushed it through the small passage and on to the engineer, making it very hot at all times. When the ship lay before the wind the air coming in the engine room hatch also exited through a small passage at the boiler room hatch, making the draft and temperature very changeable. With our backs to the wind, however, we still suffered very much, with the temperature varying from 75-105° and a draft so strong that an open light could not burn.

There was an open iron floor about 14 inches from the skin or bottom of the ship where the leakage of the ship stood. This caused the engine room to always be damp and, in the Winter, cold for the feet and hot for the head. We considered it a very unhealthy engine room . . . The ship's surgeon concurred when one of the firemen fainted from the heat while running from Port Royal to Savannah . . . a common occurrence. The surgeon made the remark that the engine room would kill all of us if we did not get out, or at least be very careful. After

[1] The *U.S.S. Conemaugh* was a gunboat of the 3rd rate, displacing 955 tons. When it first joined Admiral DuPont's South Atlantic Blockading Squadron at Port Royal on July 30, 1862, the ship mounted one 100-pounder, six 24-pounders, one 12-pounder, and one 11-inch rifled gun. It was one of the larger and more important ships of the squadron. See U.S. Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies,* v. 13.

three weeks of blockade duty in the Savannah River we returned on August 30th to Port Royal for coal and supplies.

After refitting we were ordered to the Stono Inlet.[2] Here we had the intermittent fever on board: lost the clerk and a number of officers and crew soon after we arrived.[3] We returned to Port Royal on October 15th to change the ship's gun battery.[4]

The Pocotaligo Raid

We refitted at this time in Port Royal for the expedition up the Broad River to begin on October 24, 1862. Commander Werden called all the engineers on deck and informed us of the expedition. He cautioned us to be ready for anything that might happen and to handle the machinery with care, as the river was bad.[5]

We left Port Royal at 10 P. M. on the 24th and proceeded with the expedition. Ran aground. We arrived at what is called Jenkin's Landing[6] at 8 A. M. and landed the troops. The squadron remained here until after the battle, which was known as the Pocotaligo. We began to receive the troops back on board about 2 P. M. on the 25th. We arrived back at Port Royal with the troops on board at about 3 P. M. and went to the entrance of Beaufort. The next morning we landed the troops at Beaufort and returned to Port Royal on the 28th, I think.

[2] Off Charleston.

[3] The ships log records that the *Conemaugh* supervised the capture of six persons on Folly Island in the Stono Inlet on September 21st. It was believed that they were passengers from the English steamer *Anglia* which had run aground while being pursued by the *Conemaugh,* attempting to run the blockade on September 19th. It is interesting to note that this type of action was so commonplace to the blockaders that Boynton never mentioned this in his diary, although he surely must have taken part in the pursuit.

[4] The new battery was composed of one 100-pounder, four 9-inch and one 11-inch rifled guns, and two 24-pounders. *Official Records.*

[5] The Pocotaligo Expedition was a combined operation designed to destroy key Confederate railroad bridges over the Broad River. Some 4260 Army troops under the command of Brigadier-General J. B. Brannan were landed from fifteen naval vessels, including 300 troops from the *Conemaugh.* The operation, which actually began on October 21, 1862, was delayed when the *Conemaugh* ran aground while clearing Port Royal at 12:30 P. M. When the naval commander, Commander Charles Steedman abroad the lead vessel *Paul Jones,* arrived at Mackay's Point at daybreak, not another ship was in sight. Although delayed, the operation was marginally successful, despite the loss of 21 killed and 124 wounded. *Official Records; Samuel F. DuPont: A Selection from His Civil War Letters,* John D. Hayes (ed.), v. II "The Blockade: 1862-1863," pp. 99, 262-264.

[6] William Jenkins was the chief river pilot aboard the *Paul Jones.*

The Winter Blockade

After extensive refitting we left Port Royal about November 2, 1862. We proceeded to Warsaw Sound to watch the *Nashville* and the rebel ironclad ram *Fingal.* We remained on station here until January 1863, with one trip to Port Royal for supplies. After refitting at Port Royal the ship was again ordered back to Warsaw Sound. During the next few months we were on station as much as six or seven weeks without having any communication with units of the fleet. Despite its discomforts, the engine room was preferable to the deck in mid-Winter.

During one long station our supply pump to feed the boilers and to pump into the ship had given out causing much trouble. The mineral and sand matter stirred up by the river current cut away the main valve seal, thus causing the water to recede back through the intake instead of going into the boilers. As the valves were cut away, new ones were put in. Our supply of spare valves was soon used up. Finally we were unable to keep our boilers supplied. The small engine, which was overused during this time, was growing worse and the situation was getting critical. A report of the condition of the machinery was sent to Admiral Dupont at Port Royal. Fleet Engineer McLary from the *Warbash* was sent to Warsaw Sound to examine our condition. After seeing the trouble he decided it could not be repaired.

The Admiral sent back orders that we must hold out, for he had no vessel to relieve us until a new cyclinder could be cast and the valves filed. He asked for a drawing of the cylinder, which was furnished. It was decided that they could not cast one at Port Royal. Mr. McLary was sent back with dispatches to Commander Werden saying that they could not relieve us from station and asked how long we could possibly hold out. They had sent to New York for a new pump and the Admiral had no vessel with which to release us at this time. This was the most important station of the whole squadron.

Our engineer was called on to decide the longest possible moment and it was decided that we could hold out if no accident occurred for six days. On about the 17th of January at the mid-watch, which was mine, the pump gave out. I tried for two hours to supply my boilers and could not. The density of the water in the boilers was very low and I knew that something had to be done. I reduced the steam and broke down the pump. I found an old rubber valve which I applied to the old composition one and rebuilt the pump. By 2 A. M. in the morning at the end of my watch the water density was normal and the pump was working better than ever. Thus the vessel was saved from possible

destruction. Later it became necessary to do this to other ships in the squadron. My solution was decided by the chief engineer of the fleet to be a timely and ingeniously applied invention and perhaps saved the whole fleet at Hilton Head. The *Fingal* had been expected out every day and also the *Nashville,* as a Monitor had arrived.

The Destruction of the *Queen of the Wave*

We were relieved by the arrival on station of two more Monitors at the end of January, 1863, for the first attack on Fort McAllister. Afterwards our ship was ordered back to Port Royal. From there we were ordered to Georgetown. We arrived there on the 10th of February. Captain Werden was taken sick on the 9th of February with a bowel complaint. The fleet surgeon came on board and said that he would die in his damp room. He was removed to the *Vermont* and Lieutenant Eastman of the *Keystone State* was ordered on board.

The next day I was asked by chief engineer Allen to go on board a tugboat that lay at anchor in the river. It was used as a picket boat by our ships. Other engineers had condemned it as unsalvageable. It mounted one Dalgren rifled gun and was considered very important at this station. Lieutenant Eastman [7] was very anxious to have it repaired. I examined the tug with Mr. Allen and told him I could repair it. The next day I took four men and went on board. We found a great quantity of water in her. I had it bailed out, as her pumps were out of order. It was cold and wet, but in about seven days I had her steaming. The tug was soon manned and put on regular duty. I was requested to stay on board until I could train my two first class firemen to run her.

I then returned to my post on the *Conemaugh* late on the 27th of February. We soon discovered the rebel steamer *Ocean Queen* running the blockade.[8] We got under way and gave chase. The rebels, seeing they could not save their vessel, ran her ashore at the mouth of the Big Santee River. We bombarded her until about 3 P. M. on the 28th, then returned to our anchorage.

The next day we dispatched three boats with crews to wreck her at low water. The current swamped the boats while returning and they sent back for help. They had captured six prisoners and expected a rebel force to be upon them at any moment. Lieutenant Eastman,

[7] Eastman was the senior officer at that station.

[8] The ship in question was actually the English steamer *Queen of the Wave,* a notorious blockade-runner. The incident took place on February 24th.

fearing their capture, got underway and steamed to them, about 15 miles from our anchorage.

I was asked to remain in the river on the tug with our one gun and several small arms. We knew that the Rebels would see from the fort when the steamer was out of the river and would try to take the tug. The *Conemaugh* could not get over the bar to assist us that night on account of the low tide. Lieutenant Eastman gave us a torpedo to destroy our vessel in case we were obliged to surrender. Our resolute show of force was successful, however, for nothing occurred during the day. About 12 noon it became very foggy and thick. The boat crews returned about dark with their prisoners. The steamer did not know this, but if she had she could not have entered the anchorage that night. At dark it began to rain very hard and Lieutenant Brownwell came on board the tug with me. As we expected an attack we kept on watch the entire night. We were wet to the skin the next day when the *Conemaugh* returned and we gladly went on board again.[9]

[9] The *Queen of the Wave,* run ashore, after bombardment was burned by her crew. The hull, engines, and cargo, however, remained essentially intact. Realizing the value of the ship and cargo in Confederate hands, Eastman mounted a salvage operation. The ship yielded 3200 sheets of tin, 20 bottles of quinine, 23 ounce-bottles of morphine, 15 pounds of opium, several bales of calico, 2 anchors, one binnacle, 12 reams of large-size printing paper, and some machinery parts. The unsalvageable cargo was destroyed when the ship was blown up on March 8th, *Official Records,* p. 687.

EARLY INDIAN TRADE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH CAROLINA:

POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND SOCIAL MOBILITY DURING THE PROPRIETARY PERIOD, 1670-1719

PHILIP M. BROWN *

From the founding of Carolina in 1670, until the 1730's, South Carolinians amassed great wealth in the Indian trade, providing that colony's initial capital accumulation which would later be invested in rice and indigo plantations and in the black slave trade. English goods were traded to Indians for furs and peltry which were exported to England, and there was a large market in Indian slaves. Through political, economic, and social control of South Carolina, the traders were instrumental in the colony's growth and in general southwestward expansion. They built a far-reaching trade empire, behaving ruthlessly to the Indians, French and Spanish colonials, fellow traders in neighboring colonies, and the Proprietors and public officials of their own colony.

Lewis Gray has rightly called the Indian trade a pioneer stage of economic growth. As he put it, "The profits of the Indian trade supplied capital for agricultural development and sustained the infant colonial establishment until agriculture could gain a foothold."[1] While Gray spoke of the entire South, his statement bears specific truth for South Carolina. This article will explore the traders' political struggle to control the colony, the economics of the trade, and mobility and social character of the traders.[2]

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[1] Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1806* (Gloucester, 1958), 129.

[2] This research is facilitated by the work of the South Carolina Historical Commission (now the Department of Archives and History) in publishing the *Journal of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, Sept. 20, 1710-Aug. 29, 1718*, ed. W. L. McDowell (Columbia, 1955) (hereafter cited as *JCIT*); the *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina*, ed. A. S. Salley (Columbia, 1913-1914) (hereafter cited as *JCH*); the *Journal of the Grand Council of South Carolina*, ed. A. S. Salley (Columbia, 1907) (hereafter cited as *JGC*); and the *Commissions and Instructions from the Lords Proprietors to Public Officials of South Carolina, 1685-1715*, ed. A. S. Salley (Columbia, 1916) (hereafter cited as *CIP*). An excellent secondary source is Verner Crane's *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Ann Arbor, 1929).