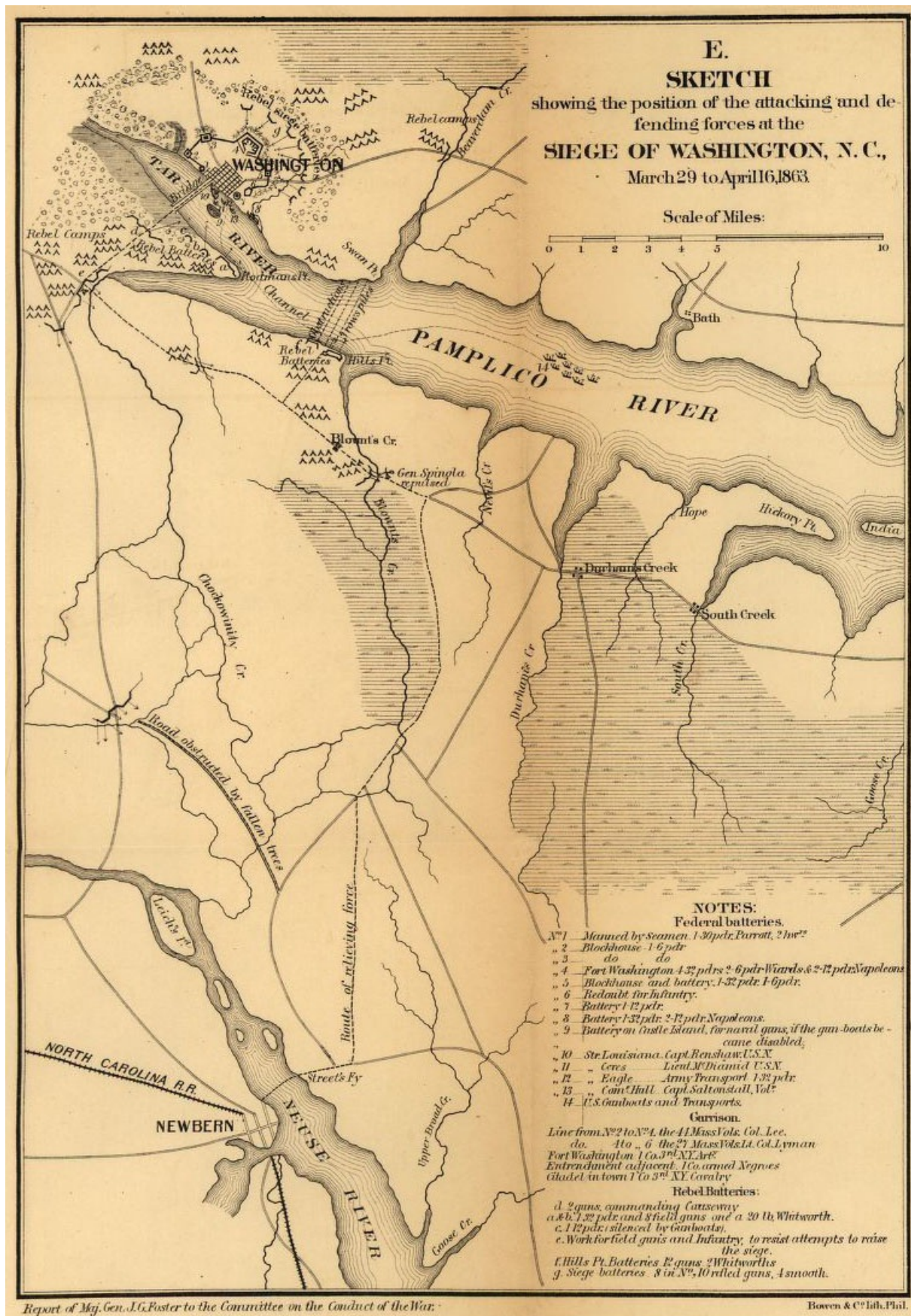


Washington, N.C., Siege of ^[1]

Washington, N.C., Siege of

by Paul Branch, 2006



Report of Maj. Gen. J.G. Foster to the Committee on the Conduct of the War.

Bowen & Co. Lith. Phil.

This map shows the position of the attacking (Confederate) and defending (Union) forces at the siege of Washington N.C. from March 29 to April 16, 1863. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress. [2]The Confederate [3] siege of Union-occupied Washington, N.C., extended from March 30 to April 16, 1863. The primary goal was to capture the town, but if that was not possible, the secondary goal was to tie up the garrison and keep Union forces on the defensive. Earlier, Maj. Gen. John G. Foster [4], leading the Union Department of North Carolina, arrived at Washington to assume command of about 1,200 men, including the 1st North Carolina Union Volunteers [5]. Three gunboats [6] supported this force. Foster ordered reinforcements, but before they could arrive, the Confederacy's Maj. Gen. Daniel H. Hill [7] approached the town on March 30 with about 5,000 troops. Since the element of surprise was lost and a direct assault had little chance of success, Hill besieged the town while his supply wagons gathered provisions from the region. The Confederates erected an earthwork battery, Fort Hill [8], six miles below Washington at Hill's Point, and its guns prevented Union transports from reaching Washington with reinforcements. Foster and his small garrison were

surrounded.

The siege involved several engagements-mostly exchanges between Confederate batteries and Union gunboats and town defenses. On the night of April 13, however, the Union steamer *Escort* succeeded in running the blockade to Washington carrying supplies, ammunition, and reinforcements. As a result, during April 15 and 16, Hill abandoned the siege and withdrew his forces. Although he failed to capture Washington, Hill did manage to throw the Union forces on the defensive and to gather large quantities of food from Union-held areas.

References:

John G. Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina* (1963).

Hal Bridges, *Lee's Maverick General: Daniel Harvey Hill* (1991).

Douglas S. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, vol. 2 (1946).

Additional Resources:

Civil War Traveler: <http://www.civilwartraveler.com/EAST/NC/eastern.html> [9]

Image Credit:

Foster, John G. *Sketch showing the position of the attacking and defending forces at the siege of Washington, N.C., March 29 to*. [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1866] Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/99447483/> [10].

Subjects:

[Civil War \(1861-1865\)](#) [11]

[War](#) [12]

Authors:

[Branch, Paul, Jr.](#) [13]

Origin - location:

[Beaufort County](#) [14]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) [15]

1 January 2006 | Branch, Paul, Jr.

Source URL: <https://ncpedia.org/washington-nc-siege>

Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/washington-nc-siege> [2] <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3904w.cw0317400/?r=0.432,0.014,0.6,0.287,0> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/confederate-party> [4] <https://www.nps.gov/people/john-g-foster.htm> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/union-volunteer-regiments> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/gunboats-wooden> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/hill-daniel-harvey> [8] <http://www.ncmarkers.com/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=B-17> [9] <http://www.civilwartraveler.com/EAST/NC/eastern.html> [10] <https://www.loc.gov/item/99447483/> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/civil-war> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/war> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/branch-paul-jr> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-22> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->