

Garibaldi, Angelo ^[1]

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Garibaldi, Angelo

by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1986

26 Jan. 1815–23 Oct. 1892

Angelo Garibaldi, steamboat captain and shipbuilder, was born in Italy of unknown parentage. He is said to have come to Baltimore as a boy with an uncle. On the death of this relative, young Garibaldi was reared by one Maitland in that city. By 1849, he had settled in Plymouth, [Washington County](#) ^[2], N.C., and entered into a business relationship with [James Cathcart Johnston](#) ^[3] of Hayes plantation in [Chowan County](#) ^[4]. Johnston carefully preserved his business correspondence with Garibaldi. These letters and the personal papers of Angelo Garibaldi give an indication of his activities for the decade preceding the [Civil War](#) ^[5]. With headquarters in Plymouth, he was in charge of the extensive shipping carried on in several steamboats and schooners owned by Johnston. In this capacity he made frequent trips to Norfolk, Charleston, and northern ports. Apparently familiar with steam navigation before coming to North Carolina, Garibaldi was sent north by Johnston in 1854 to purchase a steamboat. In that year Garibaldi supervised the construction of such a ship by Pusey and Company of Wilmington, Del. Johnston later acquired a second steamboat, the *Caledonia*, built by John Williams and Company of Baltimore and named after Johnston's vast [Halifax County](#) ^[6] plantation. Garibaldi was part owner of this ship and for much of the time was her captain. The maintenance and repair of the *Caledonia* and other steamboats owned by Johnston, including one named the *Chieftan*, were under his direct supervision.

In 1855 Garibaldi wrote Johnston regarding the construction of a stone warehouse and wharfs in the town of Plymouth. By the eve of the Civil War he had undertaken the construction of a vessel for Johnston in Plymouth. When the town was taken by Federal forces, the boat was destroyed on the stocks. With the occupation of the coast of North Carolina, Johnston's shipping activities came to an end. One boat was seized at port in Baltimore when the war broke out, and at least one vessel was taken over by the [Confederates](#) ^[7]. During the war, Garibaldi wrote Johnston that he had learned that the schooner *Howland*, one of the latter's ships, had died an honorable death in the defense of her country.

In a short time Garibaldi accumulated a respectable fortune. He may have had assets before moving to North Carolina. In the census of 1850, as "Angelo Garibaldi, mariner," he was living in Plymouth with real property valued at \$900. In 1860 he was listed in the census as living on income with real property of \$8,000 and personal property of \$20,000. The larger amount no doubt represents in large part Garibaldi's share in the Johnston steamboats.

On 18 Jan. 1852 William B. Hathaway, overseer for Johnston on his Caledonia plantation, resigned his position and wrote his employer that he had hired Henry J. Futrell to take his place at a salary of \$100 a year. Although Hathaway and Johnston had not gotten on well, Futrell soon enjoyed Johnston's confidence and was eventually one of the men who inherited his large landed estate. In the course of plying the Roanoke between Caledonia and Plymouth, Garibaldi and Futrell became friends, and after the Federal occupation of Plymouth Garibaldi refugeed in [Halifax County](#) ^[6]. Futrell's wife, Caroline, was the daughter of Henry Hancock of Halifax County. Her sister Nancy married one Gay and was left a widow with an only child, Indiana Virginia. The daughter Ivy, so called from her initials, married a young farmer, Alexander Lewis, from the Crowells section of Halifax County who died very shortly after their marriage. In 1866 the young widow, in her twenties, married the fifty-three-year old Garibaldi who thus became connected with Futrell by marriage. In his 1863 will, which was probated in 1867, Johnston devised his holdings in [Northampton](#) ^[8] and Halifax counties to Futrell. Shortly before his death, however, Johnston orally before witnesses deeded 900 acres of the Caledonia tract in Halifax County to Garibaldi. To gain title to this land and for other debts owed him by Johnston's estate, Garibaldi brought suit against Futrell. The suit appears to have been friendly, for, when Futrell died during the litigation, Garibaldi was named executor of his estate and guardian of his children.

Garibaldi eventually settled on a farm near Crowells that his wife seems to have inherited from her first husband. Here he operated a [gristmill](#) ^[9], gin, and general store and acted as a cotton broker. He was moderately successful for the times but hardly on the scale of his success in Plymouth before the war. During this period he acquired a tract of land in [Rutherford County](#) ^[10] in the North Carolina mountains. Although he was referred to as "Captain" until the end of his life, there is no indication that he piloted steamboats on the Roanoke after he moved to Halifax County. They continued to operate on the river for several decades after his death. He and his wife, who survived him for many years, had no children. He was buried under an elaborate monument in Old Trinity Cemetery in Scotland Neck. Garibaldi was described as having a strong, robust constitution and as one who enjoyed the affection and esteem of his neighbors.

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