

The Battle of New Bern

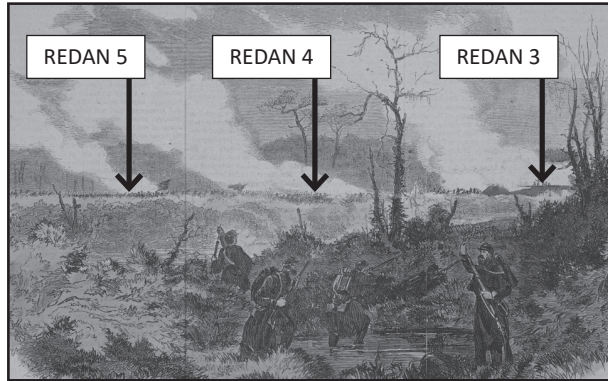
After the start of hostilities in the Civil War, a key Federal objective was disrupting the Confederate's supply chain, from ports to critical railroad lines. New Bern figured prominently in these plans as it was located along the railroad connecting Fort Macon and the port of Beaufort with the rail hub at Goldsboro. Seizure of New Bern would give Federal forces control of significant agricultural areas and supply lines to the Confederate's Army of Northern Virginia.

On March 13, 1862, 11,000 Federal troops led by General Ambrose Burnside and supported by 13 gunboats under Commander Stephen Rowan, landed at Slocum's Creek near today's Havelock and advanced to New Bern. The 1st Brigade (General Foster) moved on the right along the Old Beaufort Road with the 2nd Brigade (General Reno) on the left via the railroad. The 3rd Brigade (General Parke) followed behind Foster in reserve. Rowan's gunboats advanced upriver shelling the shoreline just ahead of the Federal advance.

Awaiting the Federal forces were 4,000 Confederate troops commanded by General Lawrence Branch, positioned along a line running from Fort Thompson on the Neuse River to Wood's Brickyard adjacent to the railroad tracks (the "Thompson Line") and westward from the railroad along the Bullen Branch of Brice's Creek.



Federal assault by Foster's 1st Brigade



Federal assault by Reno's 2nd Brigade

The battle began around 7:30 AM on March 14th and raged on until just after noon. Federal and Confederate casualties were about 1,085 men killed, wounded, or captured. The Federal Army occupied New Bern for the remainder of the Civil War and it served as a base of operations for further attacks directed by Burnside and his successors. Federal forces created a series of strong fortifications around the town with many of the buildings in New Bern being used as hospitals, staff offices, and troop quarters.

Approximately 10,000 slaves and free blacks sought refuge in New Bern during the Federal occupation. From this group of refugees, one of the first U.S. Colored Troop regiments, 1st NC Colored Volunteers (later redesignated the 35th U.S. Colored Troops), was formed. They would go on to fight with the Federal Army through the war's end.

Confederate forces tried three times but failed to recapture the town. The presence of Union forces in New Bern required the Confederacy to continually divert troops to the railroad's defense that might have been better utilized elsewhere.

Tour the Park

The Park's 33 acres cover only a portion of the original battlefield. Most of the entire battlefield has long been developed and is no longer accessible to the public. The Park has many well marked trails and takes you among the fighting positions, called redans, occupied by the 26th and 33rd NC Regiments. Interpretive panels throughout the park tell the story of the battle, the people who fought here, and its impact on New Bern.

The Gateway Plaza sign panels (Park Stop #5) explain Burnside's campaign, Branch's defense, and how the battle unfolded hour by hour. The Visitor Center sign panels (Park Stop #1) cover the occupation of New Bern and subsequent Confederate attempts to retake the town. The trails and redans have sign panels that explain what happened in those individual areas. The Living History Area sign panels (Park Stop #6) cover general topics of Civil War interest.

The trails that you will be walking will take you through the sites of combat during the battle - please be respectful of the park by not walking on the redans and not littering. The New Bern Historical Society does not receive any governmental funding for operation of the park and is supported solely by the generosity of its members and donations by visitors. Please consider making a donation in the depository located at the Visitors Center or online.



**Our work continues!
Be a part of the action!**

VOLUNTEER or DONATE!

New Bern Historical Society
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Self - Guided Tour

New Bern Battlefield Park



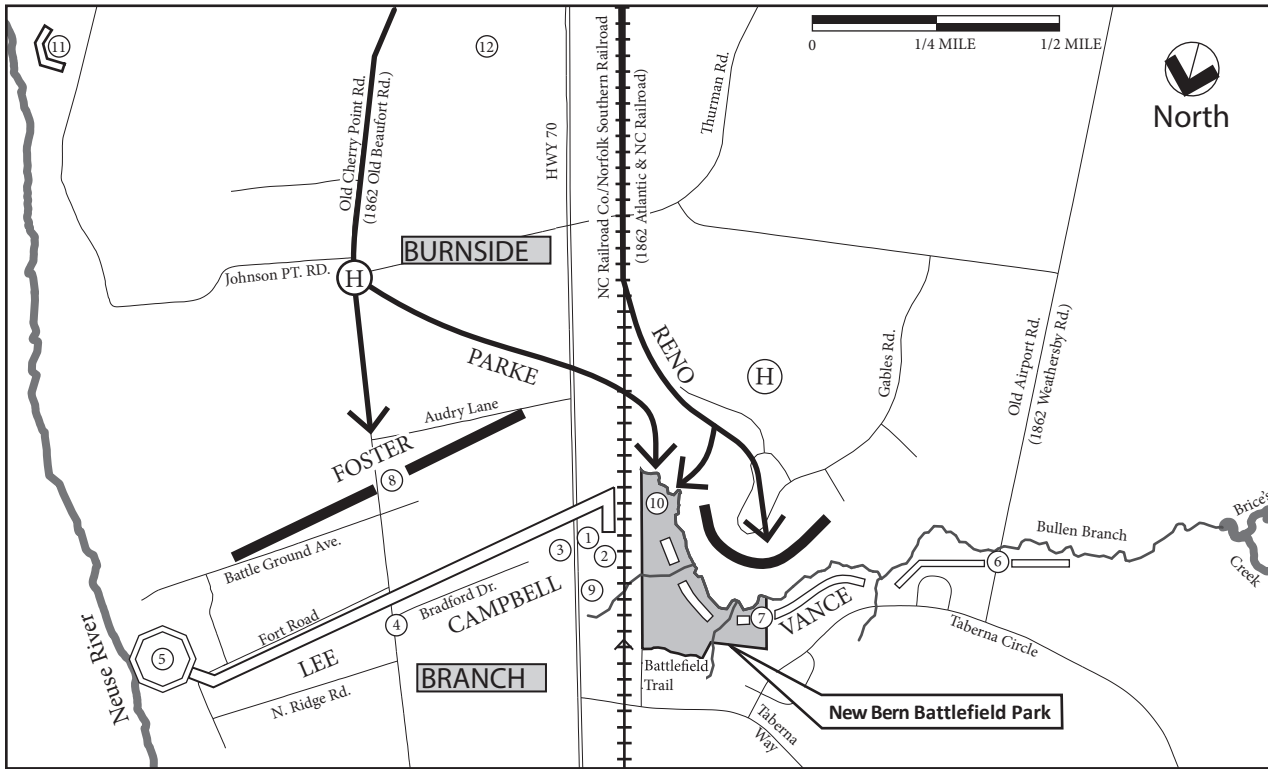
300 Battlefield Trail, New Bern, NC



Fort Thompson during the battle

New Bern Historical Society

Overall Battlefield Map



Overall Battlefield Map Legend

- ① Wood's Brick Yard
- ② Brick Kiln
- ③ Brem's Battery
- ④ Latham's Battery
- ⑤ Fort Thompson
- ⑥ William's Battery (Section of Brem's Battery)
- ⑦ Harding's Battery
- ⑧ Naval Battery
- ⑨ General Branch's Headquarters
- ⑩ "The Gap" in the Confederate Line
- ⑪ Fort Dixie
- ⑫ Federal Camps - March 13 (Approximate Location)
- Ⓜ Federal Field Hospitals (Approximate Locations)

Map Symbols

- Modern Day Roads
- ▭ Confederate Battlelines
- ▭ Federal Battlelines

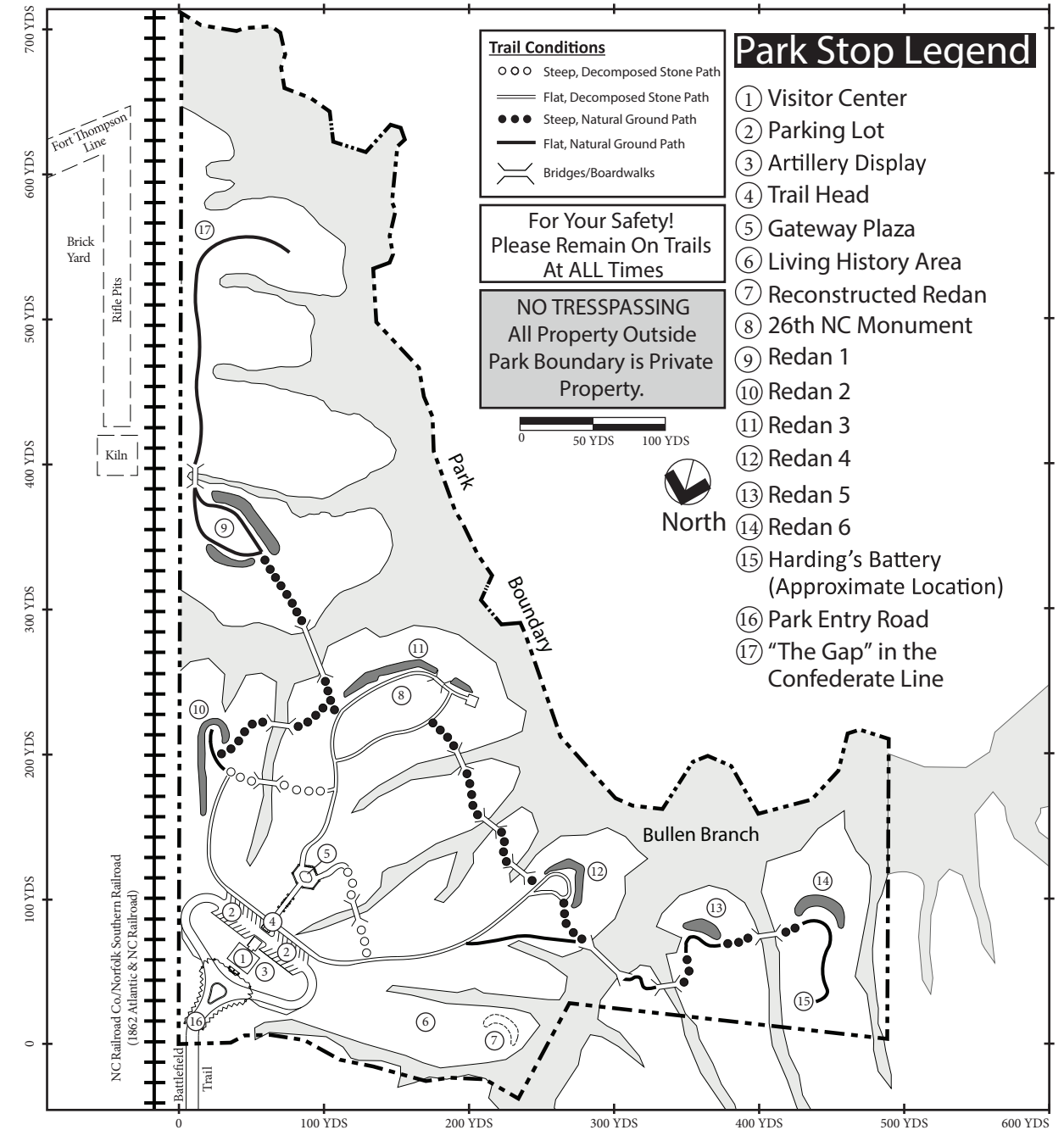
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Park Map



Trail Conditions

- ○ ○ Steep, Decomposed Stone Path
- Flat, Decomposed Stone Path
- ● ● Steep, Natural Ground Path
- Flat, Natural Ground Path
- ⎓ Bridges/Boardwalks

For Your Safety!
Please Remain On Trails
At ALL Times

NO TRESSPASSING
All Property Outside
Park Boundary is Private
Property.



Park Stop Legend

- ① Visitor Center
- ② Parking Lot
- ③ Artillery Display
- ④ Trail Head
- ⑤ Gateway Plaza
- ⑥ Living History Area
- ⑦ Reconstructed Redan
- ⑧ 26th NC Monument
- ⑨ Redan 1
- ⑩ Redan 2
- ⑪ Redan 3
- ⑫ Redan 4
- ⑬ Redan 5
- ⑭ Redan 6
- ⑮ Harding's Battery (Approximate Location)
- ⑯ Park Entry Road
- ⑰ "The Gap" in the Confederate Line