

peak before the Civil War. Such products as peanuts, corn, hickory staves, wheat, oats, potatoes and cotton were shipped from the port's wharfs. By the 1860s, area businessmen had begun to employ Chesapeake Bay bugeyes as a general cargo vessel. The bugeye design was copied by local shipbuilders and adapted to fit the local conditions.

The disruption and destruction of the Civil War did not fail to reach Swansboro. The Confederates built a fort on Huggin's Island in 1861 to guard Bogue Inlet and the main access channel to Swansboro, but the post was burned by Federal forces in August 1862. With the Federal capture of Fort Macon, Roanoke Island and New Bern that same year, Union troops were free to raid into the Carolina hinterland. Swansboro was captured twice by Federal forces in 1862 and once again in 1864. To help feed Confederate forces, salt-making re-emerged as an important local industry. During this time, a saltworks was established on Deer Island by C. H. Barnum. This works consisted of one large copper boiler and eleven iron vats, housed in two buildings. However, in August 1862 the *Wilmington Journal* reported that a Union raid under Lt. Benjamin H. Porter had destroyed the works. By war's end, commerce through Swansboro had been crippled.

From 1865 to the early 1900s, the town's maritime activity slowly recovered. Exported products included naval stores, lumber, farm produce, hogs, beef, corn crackers, corn and fresh salted fish. These were sold to consumers in Baltimore, Philadelphia and even Great Britain. The lumber industry and commercial fishing became the nucleus of the town's economy during these years. Swansboro's shipbuilding industry never recovered after the war. This was particularly true for the construction of ocean-going sailing vessels. The nearby inlets, particularly Bogue, tended to silt up and, without dredging, reduced shipping activity. More detailed maps of the area emerged in this period. The 1876 U. S. Civil Engineer's map shows the inlet, the channel with soundings, Dudley's and "Hoggins" Islands and Swansboro with about 25 buildings.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the need for railroad and steamboat transportation was a popular topic with the farmers, fishermen and businessmen in Swansboro and along the White Oak River. They were bitterly disappointed that the railroad being built from Wilmington to New Bern crossed the river at Maysville, some five miles above where navigation on the White Oak River ended. Despite efforts, no railroad linked that part of the county with the inland areas. In 1883, the steamer *Tarboro*, built in Washington, North Carolina, was sold to a transportation company in Swansboro and put in operation on the White Oak River. A second steamer, the *Minnie B.*, was built at Stella and plied the White Oak by 1887. These steamers began a new age of transportation for the Swansboro-White Oak region. Steam and gasoline powered vessels came into use for the freight and passenger trade between Morehead City and New Bern. From 1882 to 1925, the area was serviced by at least 20 of these boats. Not all were locally constructed. The Swansboro Land and Lumber Company, Swansboro's largest mill, initiated considerable growth and prosperity that continued until the Great Depression of 1930. In 1897, this company built the steamer *Nina* in Swansboro (Still 1983).

During the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century surveys were conducted for the possibility of improving navigation through Bogue Inlet and on the White Oak River. In 1884 and 1889, Captain W. H. Bixby of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE] conducted examinations of the river and inlet and concluded that existing and projected commerce through the region justified improvements. He recommended that "a navigable channel be provided for steamboats from the mouth of the river twenty-nine miles upstream to Sabiston's Bridge. ...that a channel for flat boats be provided for an additional twenty-one miles to Collins Ford (Angley 1984:9). These recommended improvements, however, were never enacted.

Additional attempts were made by local interests to promote improvements to the inlet and travel on the White Oak River. In 1896, Swansboro residents and the Swansboro Lumber Company pushed for the construction of a jetty west of Dudley Island with the hopes of "eliminating interior shoals and obtaining a channel eight feet deep at high water from Bogue Inlet to Swansboro" (Angley 1984:10). A study by the USACE, however, concluded that though the region's commerce was still significant much of its trade passed through Bogue Sound to Beaufort rather than out Bogue Inlet. The project was rejected as a consequence. In 1907 and again in 1915, residents requested Congress for improvements on the White Oak. Despite a volume of trade of 21,532 tons in 1906, the USACE determined that the prospect of future growth was limited and that existing connections and the expansion of the Intracoastal Waterway would provide the desired outlet for the region's trade (Angley 1984:13-14).

In 1905, a lifesaving station was established on the western tip of Bogue Bank. Because of the value of commerce plying the eastern seaboard of the United States the station was built to fill in the gap between facilities located at Cape Lookout and Cape Fear. The need for the station was well founded. Prior to its construction two schooners, the *Carrie L. Davis* and the *Thomas L. James*, went ashore at the inlet resulting in the loss of both vessels and their cargoes (Angley 1984:12). Additional vessels were lost and aided by station personnel after its construction including the 307-ton steamer *Governor Safford* (1908), the 18-ton schooner *M. B. Davis* (1917) and the 132-ton schooner *Morris and Cliff* (1926).

During the 1920s and 1930s, construction began on the Intracoastal Waterway, a protected waterway traversing the entire eastern seaboard of the United States. It was hoped that the waterway would facilitate coastal trade and open areas of the coast that had little access to transportation outlets. The segment passing through Onslow County was 12-feet deep and 90 feet wide. In 1938, six years after being completed, approximately 8,500 motor vessels, 200 barges and 300 tugs were crossing Onslow's waters (Watson 1995:117). Though water remained the principal method of transportation a number of new, paved roads began to appear in the county, spurred by the introduction of the automobile. In 1924, Route 17 crossed through the county following the old Colonial Post Road and in 1934, Route 24 was completed. The railroads also expanded during this period. However, most catered to the lumber industry and were short in length,