The defenses of Oak Island during the War between the States were composed of Forts Caswell and Campbell, the latter a large earth fort situated about one mile down the beach from Fort Caswell, and Battery Shaw, with some other small works, all at the close of the war under the command of Col. Charles H. Simonton. With Colonel Simonton were the following members of his staff: Capt. E. S. Martin, chief of ordnance and artillery; Capt. Booker Jones, commissary; Capt. H. C. Whiting, quartermaster, and Captain Booker, assistant adjutant general.

Fort Fisher fell about nine o'clock Sunday night, January 15, 1865, and by midnight orders had been received at Fort Caswell to send the garrisons of that fort and Fort Campbell down the beach and into the woods before daylight in order to conceal them from the Federal fleet. The troops were immediately withdrawn from the forts, and under cover of darkness marched away. Orders were also received to spike the guns in those two forts and destroy the ammunition as far as possible. Accordingly, during Monday, the 16th of January, the chief of ordnance and artillery, Capt. E. S. Martin, was employed with the ordnance force of the forts in carrying out this order, preparing to burn the barracks—large wooden structures built outside and around Fort Caswell—and to blow up the magazines.

About one o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, January 17, the order came to evacuate and blow up the magazines. Thereupon Col. C. H. Simonton, Lieut. Col. John D. Taylor, and Capt. Booker Jones, who had remained up to this time, departed, leaving Captain Martin to destroy the barracks and forts. The buildings without the fort and the citadel within were at once set on fire and were soon blazing from bottom to top. Trains had been laid during the day to each of the seven magazines at Fort Caswell and the five magazines at Fort Campbell, and under the lurid glare of the burning buildings the match was applied to the trains, and magazine after magazine exploded with terrific report. One of the magazines in Fort Caswell contained nearly one hundred thousand pounds of powder, and when it exploded the volume of sound seemed to rend the very heavens, while the earth trembled, the violence of the shock being felt in Wilmington, thirty miles distant, and even at Fayetteville, more than one hundred miles away. The sight was grand beyond description. Amidst this sublime and impressive scene the flag at Fort Caswell was for the last time hauled down. It was carried away by Captain Martin, who,

with his men, silently departed, the last to leave the old fort, which for four long years of war had so effectually guarded the main entrance to the river.

FORT FISHER.

Col. William Lamb, who was in command of Fort Fisher, in his admirable report of its defense, says:

"The indentation of the Atlantic Ocean in the Carolina coast known as Onslow Bay and the Cape Fear River, running south from Wilmington, form the peninsula known as Federal Point, which during the Civil War was called Confederate Point. Not quite seven miles north of the end of this peninsula stood a high sandhill called the 'Sugar Loaf.' Here there was an intrenched camp for the army of Wilmington under Gen. Braxton Bragg, the department commander, that was hid from the sea by forest and sandhills. From this intrenched camp the river bank, with a neighboring ridge of sand-dunes, formed a covered way for troops to within a hundred yards of the left salient of Fort Fisher. Between the road and the ocean beach was an arm of Masonboro Sound, and where it ended, three miles north of the fort, were occasional fresh-water swamps, generally wooded with scrub growth and in many cases quite impassable. Along the ocean shore was an occasional battery formed from a natural sandhill, behind which Whitworth guns were carried from the fort to cover belated blockade runners or to protect more unfortunate ones that had been chased ashore.

"About half a mile north of the fort there was a rise in the plain, forming a hill some twenty feet above the tide on the river side, and on this was a redoubt commanding the approach to the fort by the river road. Thus nature, assisted by some slight engineering work, had given a defense to Confederate Point which would have enabled an efficient commander at the intrenched camp, coöperating with the garrison of Fort Fisher, to render the point untenable for a largely superior force at night, when the covering fire of the Federal Navy could not distinguish between friend and foe."

The plans of Fort Fisher were Colonel Lamb's, and as the work progressed they were approved by Generals French, Raines, Longstreet, Beauregard, and Whiting. It was styled by Federal engineers the "Malakoff of the South." It was built