"I acted under the protection of my father, who was a full branch pilot; in other words, he was permitted to carry in vessels of any depth suitable for the water then available. I was an apprentice to him.

"When the war broke out I was twenty-one years of age and, in view of certain circumstances favorable to my reputation, I was given by the Board of Commissioners of Navigation and Pilotage a license for twelve feet, the laws having been changed a year or two before the war in respect to the method of issuing licenses.

"My father, James N. Craig, lived a short distance from Fort Fisher on the river side at a place called Craig's Landing, and his house and landing were both used later by the commander of Fort Fisher, Col. William Lamb, who was so intimately engaged with my father that he gave him general charge of the duty of setting lights for the benefit of blockade runners, under certain restrictions which had been provided. I was therefore engaged for nearly two years after the outbreak of the war in assisting my father, and became more familiar with the channel and the approaches of the channel than many other pilots who had not the opportunity of sounding, as we had frequently, under government instructions.

"The first proposal made to me to take a ship through the blockade was by Capt. E. C. Reed, commander of the celebrated cruiser *Sumter*. This vessel had been dismantled of her guns on account of her slow speed and general unfitness for a cruiser, after her destruction of many vessels of the enemy, and she was sent into Wilmington with a cargo of war stores, conspicuous among which were two enormous Blakely guns, which were subsequently used in the defense of Charleston.

"After the discharge of the cargo at Wilmington, the *Sumter* was loaded with cotton, and Captain Reed brought her down to Old Brunswick landing and anchored before he made arrangements for the engagement of a pilot to take him out.

"In coming into the Cape Fear Captain Reed had, through a successful ruse, passed through the blockading fleet by hoisting the United States ensign and pretending to be one of the fleet. The blockaders did not discover his true character until he was under the guns of Fort Fisher, and consequently they were very eager to capture him on his voyage outward.

"At that time of the tide it was impossible to take over the Rip Shoal or across either of the bars a ship drawing more than

eleven feet. The *Sumter* drew eleven feet of water and grounded repeatedly in attempting to go out. Captain Reed offered me $1,000 in gold if I would take the ship out successfully and reach Bermuda, where he would discharge me and proceed to England with his cargo.

"I made several ineffectual attempts to get the *Sumter* outside, but, owing to the lack of water and the vigilance of the blockading fleet, we were baffled repeatedly. At last I took her out successfully over the bar at New Inlet, the fleet in the meantime having concentrated at the Western Bar, expecting to capture her there, and Captain Reed subsequently told me that he proceeded to Bermuda and to England without sighting a single hostile vessel during the whole voyage.

"A short time after that I piloted in the Steamship *Orion* over New Inlet Bar successfully, the vessel having arrived off the bar without a pilot and, very luckily for the ship as well as for me, hailed me while I was setting some lights for another vessel, the *Cornubia,* ready to go out in charge of Pilot C. C. Morse.

"Just as Morse was passing us, he called out, 'Don't take your lights in too soon, because if we run afoul of a blockader outside, he may run us in again, and we want the benefit of the lights.'

"Sure enough, a few minutes after the *Cornubia* had faded from our sight beyond the bar, we were surprised by the sudden looming up of another large steamer, which at first we supposed was a blockader chasing the *Cornubia.*

"We were still more surprised, and really frightened, when they lowered a boat and pulled close up to us in the semi-darkness and demanded to know who we were, Pilot Thomas Newton being with me. They asked if we were pilots, which we admitted was the case. The voice, which proved to be that of the chief officer of the blockade runner *Orion,* a very fine ship, then replied, 'We have been trying to run into Charleston, and failed to do so. We are groping around for the New Inlet Bar. Will you take us in?' We at once agreed, and proceeded to the ship and brought her in over the bar and anchored her in safety under the guns of Fort Fisher.

"Strangely enough, the captain of the *Orion,* who claimed to be a Baltimorean, recognized me, and reminded me that I had taken him over the bar before the war, when he commanded a schooner from Baltimore.