



Artwork by Stephen McCall

## CONFEDERATE EARTHEN FORT

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, the Confederate Army chose Rainbow Banks in Martin County as a site for fortifications. These fortifications provided the upper Roanoke Valley with badly need protection against the Union gunboats that were beginning to enter eastern North Carolina's rivers and sounds. The 100-foot clay bluffs at the area of the river gave the Confederates a clear view of

the river in both directions, and their vantage point was too high for the guns on the Union boats to reach. In addition to protecting the citizens of the area, the fort protected "The Lifeline of the Confederacy" – a railroad bridge at Weldon that helped to supply General Lee's army with provisions – and the building site of an ironclad vessel, the C.S.S. Albemarle, just above Hamilton.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Fort Branch is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 1:30 to 5:30 pm beginning the first Saturday in April through the re-enactment weekend in November. Other times by appointment.

### DIRECTIONS

Fort Branch is located 3 miles southeast of Hamilton, N.C. Just off NC Hwy 125/903 at 2883 Fort Branch Road in Martin County on the Roanoke River.

### CONTACTING FORT BRANCH

If you have any questions about Fort Branch, if you would like to share information or artifacts related to the fort, or if you would like to volunteer for preservation/restoration work at the fort, drop us a line at the address below or e-mail [info@fortbranchcivilwarsite.com](mailto:info@fortbranchcivilwarsite.com).

Fort Branch Battlefield Commission, Inc.  
PO Box 355  
Hamilton, N.C. 27840  
[www.fortbranchcivilwarsite.com](http://www.fortbranchcivilwarsite.com)



**MARTIN COUNTY**  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT  
== *authority* ==

**Martin County Tourism Development Authority**  
Located at 132 West Main Street, Williamston  
P.O. Box 382, Williamston, NC 27892  
800-776-8566 or 252-792-6605  
Email: [tourism@visitmartincounty.com](mailto:tourism@visitmartincounty.com)  
Website: [www.visitmartincounty.com](http://www.visitmartincounty.com)

# FORT BRANCH

★★★★ Civil War Site ★★★★★



HAMILTON  
NORTH CAROLINA

# FORT BRANCH TODAY...



On display at Fort Branch are eight of twelve original cannons, and the restored late 1800's steam engine from the "Ranger". Local Indian pottery and artifacts from Hoggtown, an Eighteen Century river community, can also be seen. The reconstructed winter quarters of the 1st N.C. Volunteers are also open for public viewing. Additional displays, such as rebuilt gun emplacements and the restoration of an 1850's farmhouse.

The Fort Branch Battlefield Commission is working to preserve and restore the Fort and its heritage. The First North Carolina Volunteers, a Civil War re-enactment group, uses Fort Branch for their winter headquarters and battle drills.



In 1987, the First Annual Battle Re-enactment was held at Fort Branch. A battle re-enactment is held annually at the Fort the first weekend in November offering a unique "Living History Program" to visitors. Other special events at the Fort usually include a Civil War Christmas the first Saturday in December and a Spring Living History Program.



Visit our website for more information  
[www.fortbranchcivilwarsite.com](http://www.fortbranchcivilwarsite.com)

Photography courtesy of Tony Kelly