

29 Jun 2005

Blockade Runners - Lieutenant E. Hooker, Commanding the *USS Victoria*, while on an expedition to Little River in search of blockade runners, reported on January 2, 1863, *“Sir: I have to report my coal as reduced to 10 tons. I have also to report that I have received information by contrabands, four of whom came to my ship December 30, that there were two schooners in Little River, nearly or quite loaded for sea, and also one in Shallotte in the same condition. On the afternoon of the 31st a sail was discovered inside, which we thought was working down to Little River Bar. We soon, however, lost sight of her. At sunset I got underway and proceeded to Little River and lay off and on for a while. At 8 p.m. I came to anchor and sent a boat on shore. At the first point of landing they were met by cavalry pickets and retired. They then entered the river and proceeded several miles up the river without, however, discovering anything except more cavalry pickets. The boat returned to the ship at 7 o’clock a.m., January 1, and I returned to my anchorage. The schooners in Little River are the Argyle and James Bailey. At high water there is about 9 feet on Little River Bar.”*

It is clear from the surviving records of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron that Little River was used by blockade runners. A captured Confederate document from Confederate Major A.B. Magruder of Wilmington, NC states, *“Run into the mouth of Little River, a small stream of _feet water, near the boundary line of North and South Carolina, emptying into the Atlantic about 30 or 40 miles below Cape Fear. It is not down on the charts nor on the coast survey, and its existence even – certainly its harbor and anchorage ground – is hardly known to any Yankee. Communications from a little village or post-office called Little River, about 4 or 6 miles from the mouth, are readily had with the interior by country roads, etc., with Charleston and Wilmington. A pilot can be had at Wilmington to meet and bring in vessels from the coast, and rosin and turpentine in any quantity can be procured for return cargo; also cotton, lumber, etc.”*