

BATTLE OF PLYMOUTH



Strategic Port & Transportation Center



Comm. Charles Flusser



Comm. James Cooke



Gen. Robert F. Hoke

Hoke to dislodge the Union garrison at Plymouth, about 3,000 men under Gen. William H. Wessells. The Federals had constructed an extensive system of forts, redoubts, and trenches, and five gunboats under Commander Charles W. Flusser helped protect the town. Hoke had about 13,000 troops and the ironclad ram CSS *Albemarle*, newly christened and untested in battle.

The fighting began on Sunday, April 17, and continued until Wednesday. The *Albemarle* rammed and sank the gunboat *Southfield* on April 19, and Flusser was killed during the action. Hoke and Ransom carried most of the fortifications, and Wessells hoisted the white flag of surrender the next day. The Confederates captured

not only about 2,500 prisoners, most of whom were sent to Andersonville, Georgia, but also 25 cannons, 500 horses, and 5,000 stands of small arms and the port itself.



Harper's image of the capture of Plymouth.

The Battle of Plymouth, April 17–20, 1864, was the last major Confederate victory of the Civil War and the third largest battle fought in North Carolina. Two North Carolinians, Gen. Robert F. Hoke and Gen. Matthew W. Ransom, led the Confederate infantry while Commander James W. Cooke, another native son, had charge of the ironclad ram CSS *Albemarle*.

Since 1862, the U.S. Army had occupied Plymouth, a strategic port and transportation center in a rich agricultural region. By 1864, the Roanoke River and the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad comprised “The Lifeline of the Confederacy” for Gen. Robert E. Lee’s army in Virginia. To protect that lifeline, Lee dispatched

May 17, 1862.
U.S. occupation begins.

Dec. 10, 1862.
Confederates capture Plymouth
but withdraw.

Apr. 17–20, 1864.
Battle of Plymouth;
U.S. forces surrender.

Oct. 27–28, 1864.
U.S. Lt. William B. Cushing
sinks CSS *Albemarle*.

Oct. 31, 1864.
U.S. Army forces reoccupy Plymouth.

Local craftsmen constructed the 3/8-scale, 63-foot-long CSS *Albemarle* replica displayed here. They began work in September 2001 and finished in April 2002. The gunport shutters operate and a gun crew inside the casemate can roll out the guns and fire them.