

Foard, John Hanby ^[1]

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by John Hanby Foard, Jr., 1986

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John Hanby Foard, textile executive, manufacturer, museum director, and [Civil War](#) ^[2] historian, was born in Wilmington, the fourth child of Charles Deems (1863–1951) and Florence Hanby (1875–1932) Foard. He was a grandson of [Osborne Giles Foard](#) ^[3]. Young Foard attended the Cape Fear Academy in Wilmington and [Horner Military Institute](#) ^[4]. During the years he was growing up in and around Wilmington, he spent a great deal of time at Wrightsville Sound where his grandfather, John Hazard Hanby (1841–1910), owned a summer resort hotel called Atlantic View. Here, he gained a love of the sea, and later he became a member of the Carolina Yacht Club at Wrightsville Beach. In the early 1920s he participated in speedboat racing and, along with Julius T. Herbst, a marine engineer and inventor, raced some of the first hydroplane boats in the country.

About 1919 Foard went to work for the [Atlantic Coast Line Railroad](#) ^[5]; eventually he was a traveling freight agent working out of Atlanta, Ga. During the depression of the 1930s, he was sent to Washington, D.C., to represent the Coast Line when executives of the nation's railroads gathered to standardize freight rates. Around 1939, he accepted a position with Rague Ring Company in Atlanta as a salesman of textile spinning rings for use in the manufacturing of yarn and moved his residence to Newton to be near the center of the regional textile industry.

Recognizing the need for a stronger and longer lasting spinning ring, he patented a process for producing one around 1954; shortly afterward he entered into a partnership with Albert Kluttz, Kluttz Machine and Foundry Company of Gastonia. As president of Kluttz Rings, Inc., he produced a product that virtually cornered the spinning ring market. In 1954–55, he was chairman of the Associate Members Division of the Southern Textile Association. With the coming Civil War centennial, Foard began in 1960 to research and produce a miniature replica of the Model 1857 12-pound Napoleon Gun-Howitzer as a gift for his customers. The cannons received so much publicity that in 1961 he formed Centennial Guns, a division of Kluttz, to manufacture serial numbered cannons for sale as collector's items. For his contributions in preserving military history, he was elected a member of the [Company of Military Historians](#) ^[6]. On 6 April 1962, the commanding general of Fort Sill, Okla., conferred upon Foard a Certificate of Membership in the Ancient Order of Artillerists in recognition of his keen interest in preserving the history of artillery. During this period, he became interested in seeing the battleship [U.S.S. North Carolina](#) ^[7] brought to Wilmington. For his contribution to the project, which was accomplished in October 1961, he was made an honorary admiral of the North Carolina Navy.

In 1962, Foard sold his interests in Kluttz Rings and Centennial Guns and formed the John H. Foard Company, a textile consulting and machinery sales firm. At this time he represented Perfect Circle Corporation as a textile consultant.

As a boy, Foard delighted in hearing tales from his grandfather Hanby, a Confederate veteran, and others, about the Civil War, [blockade-runners](#) ^[8], and [Fort Fisher](#) ^[9]. These tales remained with him and stirred a lifelong interest in the study of Civil War history. As he approached retirement, he began to seek a way to present the importance of Wilmington as a seaport receiving vital supplies for the Confederacy through blockade-running and the protection of Fort Fisher. In 1964, he persuaded a group of businessmen to form a corporation for the purpose of building a museum in the Wilmington area. The result was the Blockade Runner Museum, Inc., at Carolina Beach. In 1965 he moved his residence from Newton to Carolina Beach, and after several years of intense research and construction he opened the museum to the public on 4 July 1967. Foard was the director and secretary-treasurer of the corporation. His efforts were rewarded on 1 December 1967, when the museum received an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History "for its outstanding contribution to local history."

Through the years Foard continued to believe in the value of preserving local and national history for future generations. In January 1974 he found that the historically important "[Sugar Loaf](#)" ^[10] historical site was being destroyed by vandals, so he launched a one-man campaign to have it protected. By bringing the matter to the attention of the public, he was able to convince federal officials to turn over the site, which adjoined the Masonboro State Park, to state officials for its preservation.

While living at Carolina Beach, Foard also became active in community affairs. He was responsible for getting the Richmond Glove Company, of Richmond, Ind., to locate a plant in the town in 1965; in June 1967 it became a part of the Carolina Glove Company. As a committee member of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, he enthusiastically supported tourism for the area. In 1976, he worked through the local Lions Club to obtain some kind of medical facility in the Carolina Beach area. Subsequently he was appointed to a committee to determine the feasibility of opening and operating a clinic to be staffed by a special type registered nurse and to be periodically visited by physicians. Through his efforts, the facility, which was a new concept in medical care (there was only one other in the state), opened on 16 May 1977.

Foard was an associate member of the Southern Textile Association and a member of the American Textile Manufacturers Institute, the North Carolina Textile Manufacturers Association, the Company of Military Historians, and the American Ordnance Association. He was a [Democrat](#) ^[11], Methodist (later Presbyterian), and Lion. On 17 April 1943 he married Kathryn Augusta Sandusky (b. 1911). Their children were John Hanby, Jr. (b. 1944) and William Sandusky (b. 1945). Foard died unexpectedly in his sleep in his home at Carolina Beach and was buried in the Eastview Cemetery, Newton.

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

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