

Dan River Basin Association

# CURRENTS

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*Dr. Lindley Butler*  
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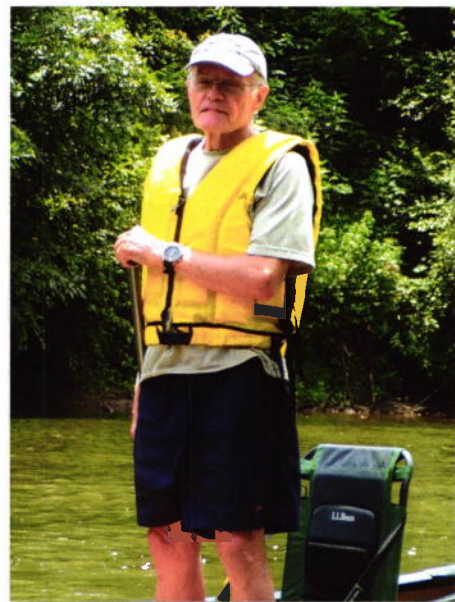
## **Dr. Lindley Butler**

*Reidsville, North Carolina, United States  
Father, Husband, Historian, Educator,  
Author, Humanitarian, Diver,  
Founding Member of the Dan River Basin Association*

Through the years, Dr. Lindley Butler has served in many capacities for various organizations. One of his biggest contributions can be seen in the organization he helped found, the Dan River Basin Association. This labor of love by the founding members was born from the desire to protect the natural and cultural resources of the basin for future generations.

Dr. Lindley S. Butler received his A.B., M.A., and Ph.D., degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was Historian in Residence and Professor at Rockingham Community College, Wentworth, NC 1968-1996 and Professor Emeritus thereafter. In addition to countless articles and reviews, he published two brief histories of Rockingham County and monographs on the coming of the American Revolution, local scouting, and early Albemarle County. He authored several books including *A History of North Carolina in the Proprietary ERA, 1629-1729*, and my favorite, *Pirates, Privateers, and Rebel Raiders of the Carolina Coast*.

Lindley was a master at combining biography and maritime history; and in his book *Pirates, Privateers, and Rebel Raiders of the Carolina Coast* Dr. Butler combines drama and adventure as he tells the stories of eight men who all made a living on the seas and inlets of the North Carolina Coast. “All of them, by one way or another, were masters of organized theft at sea.” according to Dr. Butler. He goes on to say, “they were skilled seamen and decisive imaginative leaders who possessed a deep thirst for adventure, at times pursuing danger with reckless abandon. But most importantly they were connected by place. They used the rivers, estuaries, tidal marshes, sounds, barrier islands, and outer banks of North Carolina.” Lindley could most certainly relate as he possessed a thirst for adventure and was a bit of a pirate himself, plying the waters of the Dan and Smith as a youngster, then growing to learn about the early mariners and rivermen of these North Carolina waters.



*As I sit here searching for words to describe a man I knew for just a short 15 out of his amazing 83 years, I can only think back on why he was a hero to me. He was soft spoken and gentle but had a commanding presence based on a wealth of knowledge that comes from someone who has spent his life in the pursuit of what he loved. Dr. Lindley Butler was truly a romantic historian. His first love was his beautiful wife T, and his second love had to be history, in particular, the history of North Carolina from its mountains to the sea.*

*Brian Williams  
Dan River Basin Association*

Not only was he an author and an historian, Dr. Butler was an accomplished scuba diver. In 1971, the state legislature appropriated funds to establish North Carolina's Underwater Archaeology Branch (UAB) working out of the Fort Fisher Preservation Lab. With grant funds provided by the American Battlefield Protection Program, the UAB contracted



with Dr. Butler to prepare property nominations for Civil War shipwreck sites. In November of 1996 researchers discovered what would later be determined to be the Queen Annes Revenge (QAR) -- the flagship of the one and only Blackbeard. Dr. Butler would be one of the divers and historians to work on the project and the research resulted in the recovery of thousands of artifacts supporting the identification of the shipwreck as Blackbeard's flagship.

*continued . . .*