

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

April, 1996

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

CAPTAIN JOHN N. MAFFITT & THE CONFEDERATE STATES NAVY April 25 Meeting

Last April's meeting focused on the well-known Raphael Semmes, commander of the CSS *Alabama*, the scourge of the US Navy. This April, we'll have the opportunity to learn more about one of our own local wartime heroes, John Newland Maffitt, blockade runner and commander of the CSS *Florida*, a cruiser which was also deeply feared by the Federal Navy.

William A. Hall III, a local historian who has researched Maffitt and his naval career for the last ten years, will present our program for the evening.

Unfortunately, Captain Maffitt has not had the fame that Semmes has long enjoyed. Yet, Maffitt was an extremely successful Confederate raider who put a sizeable dent in US commerce during his service in the CS Navy. He deserves greater credit than he's received for his exploits. Maffitt, who married in Wilmington and later lived on Bradley Creek, is buried in Oakdale Cemetery.

Make plans to attend the April meeting of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table on Thursday, April 25, 7:30 pm, in Room 101, King Hall, at UNC-W.

MORT KUNSTLER GETTYSBURG CALENDAR PRINTS Sale To Benefit the Round Table

Harry Clements, a member of our RT, will have available for sale at the April 25 meeting a selection of twelve different Gettysburg Calendar Prints by the well-known Civil War artist, Mort Kunstler. The prints are double-matted and mounted in quality frames with TruVu glass and ready to hang on your wall. The price for each print is \$40.00 of which \$5.00 will go to benefit the RT.

Harry will be on hand at 7:00 in Room 101 so that any of you who are interested can see this selection of prints and he'll also be available following the meeting. Come early and pick out a CW print!

EXTRA RATIONS

Recently, the RT received a check for \$100.00 from The Friends of the Public Library, our share of the profits from the sale of the Fort Fisher calendars last fall. We're grateful to Beverly Tetterton at the library for her leadership in the calendar campaign.

Those of you who have an interest in the medical history of the Civil War should know about the development of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. The museum will display and preserve thousands of CW medical artifacts in a building where CW casualties were brought after the Battle of Antietam. You can become a charter member of the NMCWM, a non-profit organization, by writing to Box 470, Frederick MD 21705-0470 or calling 301-695-1864.

The Bennett Place State Historic Site in Durham will commemorate the 131st anniversary of the Bennett Place Surrender at the site, Sunday, April 28. Mark Bradley, the anniversary speaker, will present "General Joseph Johnston in North Carolina: From Bentonville to Bennett Place." Mark's talk will be held at 1:30 and 3:30 pm. For more information, call Bennett Place 919-383-4345.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN VIRGINIA The RT Spring Tour of Lee's Retreat Route

Nineteen members of the CFCWRT boarded a chartered bus early Friday morning, March 8, for our Spring Tour in the Petersburg/Appomattox area, the site of Grant and Lee's final struggle.

We arrived in Petersburg at noon, and after a quick lunch within view of a venerable home which served as HQ for both USA Generals U.S. Grant and George G. Meade, we headed out to the battlefields. Chris Calkins, our tour guide, promised to show us important sites which figured in the Petersburg Campaign down to its last days. Driving west from Petersburg, we saw "Indiana," the ante-bellum home near which CSA General A.P. Hill left his HQ in a cottage on the surrounding plantation, to ride to his death. Further west, we drove by "Edgehill," the Turnbull house where Lee had his HQ during the latter part of the Petersburg siege. We drove through a modern subdivision, then parked on the edge of a wooded hill, and walked down to the marker which stands at the site where A.P. Hill was killed by Union soldiers during a morning ride with one of his aides. Further on, we passed the Venable house, CSA General Henry Heth's HQ. We crossed over Hatcher's Run where one of the campaign engagements took place. Then, we drove on to the site of the Battle of Lewis Farm on the Quaker Road and saw the dilapidated house where USA General Joshua Chamberlain spent the night after the battle. We passed the large field where CSA General Wade Hampton delivered hundreds of head of what was once USA cattle after his "Beefsteak" cavalry raid. We stopped at the site of the Battle of White Oak Road where CSA General Robert E. Lee rallied his troops and sent them forward. Our final destination for the day was the Five Forks battlefield. Chris led us through the woods to "The Angle," where CSA General Robert Ransom's North Carolina troops anchored the Confederate left flank. These troops were overwhelmed in the victorious attack led by USA General Philip Sheridan. We toured the small Five Forks visitor center, just adjacent to the slight elevation where CSA Colonel Willie Pegram fell mortally wounded while commanding his artillery in an effort to slow the Union attack. Then our bus made its way up a long country lane to "Burnt Quarter," an 18th Century plantation house where USA General George Custer clashed with Confederate cavalry.

The evening was capped with a delicious banquet! Chris Calkins and his wife joined us and Chris answered many of our remaining questions about the Petersburg battles.

Saturday morning saw us boarding the bus and heading toward Appomattox Court House. On the way out of town, Chris pointed out numerous wartime buildings and homes which still stand, including the Gas Works, located just behind our motel, and the focal point of Union artillery barrages during the siege. The old brick building still bears marks of damage by artillery projectiles. As we left Petersburg, we stopped at several places on Lee's retreat route. One of these was Sutherland Station where NC and SC troops were outflanked and forced to retire. Another was Namozine Presbyterian Church, where CSA General Rufus Barringer's NC cavalry was forced back. The quaint little church, used as a hospital after the fighting, still has visible bloodstains on its floors. We made several stops at the Saylor's Creek battlefield, and Chris gave us some fascinating accounts of the exploits of some individual soldiers there.

And then we drove into Appomattox, the site of Lee's surrender to Grant. What a moving place that is! We toured the buildings, including the McLean House and the bookstore. We walked down the slope where Confederate troops ascended from the valley below to lay down their arms to the Union soldiers. We saw where USA General Joshua Chamberlain stood in a place of honor to receive the CSA soldiers as their Army of Northern Virginia passed out of existence. After a couple of hours at Appomattox, we headed back toward Petersburg.

Sunday morning, we toured the Petersburg National Battlefield, again with Chris Calkins. We stopped at Fort Stedman as well as the Crater. Then we turned southward on I-95 and started for Wilmington.

The tour was all that we imagined it would be...and more! Chris Calkins was a delightful host and guide, a constant fund of information and good humor. Many of us got to know each other better during the weekend. Everyone agreed the tour was a success, and we're already beginning to think about the next one!

Our special thanks to Tommy King and Dan Geddie who did so much to plan and coordinate this very enjoyable trip!