

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

February, 1997

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS AT OAKDALE CEMETERY

February 13 Meeting

8:00 pm

Wayne Carver, a member of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, has spent many hours in recent weeks creating an inventory of Civil War veterans, both Confederate and Union, buried in Wilmington's Oakdale Cemetery. Wayne has been locating these veterans at Oakdale, then researching their personal biographies at the public library's North Carolina Room.

At our February meeting, Wayne will present a program about some of the very interesting discoveries that he's made about soldiers at Oakdale. He has unearthed some fascinating war stories about some of these enlisted men, lieutenants, captains, majors, and colonels. Though many of us are familiar with the war records of some of the more well-known local heroes, there is a wealth of information about lesser known soldiers whose lives and military service was often just as colorful and adventuresome.

Wayne will discuss such local men as Captain James I. Metts, Commander Joseph Price, CSN, and Octavius Wiggins who fought in 22 battles, was captured at Gettysburg, and later made a successful escape!

Note the shift in the meeting time for the February meeting to 8:00 pm. (We have a conflict this month at our regular 7:30 pm time). The meeting will be held in Cameron Hall on UNC-W campus, Room 132, 8:00 pm, on Thursday, February 13.

SPRING BUS TOUR: RICHMOND AND THE SEVEN DAYS CAMPAIGN

Tour March 21-23.....Sign-Up Deadline Monday, March 3

The Seven Days campaign is a fascinating one. For those of you who have read accounts of the Seven Days, but have never been able to grasp the sequence of events from the beginning to the end of the campaign, this tour will orient you to the the flow of the fighting from one battlefield to another. Gaines' Mill and Malvern Hill are particularly well-defined battlefields with dramatic terrain. Gaines' Mill was fought on steep slopes where Union troops were well-entrenched; the determined and aggressive fighting of Garland's North Carolinians and Hood's Texans broke the Union line and routed the Federals. Malvern Hill was the site of another well-entrenched Union infantry and artillery line where uncoordinated Confederate attacks cost the lives of thousands of southerners, leaving the Federals in command of the hill.

If you've never been on a concentrated CW battlefield tour like the one we'll have in March, you may not realize its benefits. One benefit is the cost. Most weekend tours like ours charge \$175.00-\$200.00 for the tour alone; your transportation and lodging are additional. Another benefit is that of being in a small group where you have greater access to the tour guide, more opportunity to ask questions of particular interest to you. And a third benefit is of course the chance to get to know your fellow RT members better!

The tour's cost is \$185 per person double occupancy and \$235 single occupancy. This includes two nights at the Sheraton Inn, dinner Friday night, Saturday box lunch, dinner Saturday night, and guide service fees. Sign-up deadline is Monday, March 3. Your check (given or sent to Dan Geddie, CFCWRT, Box 10535, Wilmington NC 28405) is your reservation. Don't miss it!

EXTRA RATIONS

* Just as planned, "Little Billy," the light twelve-pounder Napoleon named for CSA General WHC Whiting, who fought at Fort Fisher until the bitter end, boomed away with a hefty gunpowder charge at 10:00 am on January 10 in Oakdale Cemetery! The event was a dedication of this cast bronze reproduction artillery piece mounted on a hand-crafted carriage purchased by the Fort Fisher Restoration Committee. The cannon has now become a permanent display at Fort Fisher Historic Site. Present were RT members Tom Morgan, Bob Cooke, Palmer Royal, Dan Geddie, Chris Fonvielle, Wayne Carver, and George Slaton.

* How's this for a Christmas gift?! Tonia Smith of Pinehurst, one of our most enthusiastic and knowledgeable RT members, was surprised this Christmas with some unique CW gifts from her husband. She's now the delighted owner of an original 1864 Springfield-type .58 caliber musket manufactured by Colt and a Model 1860 Light Cavalry Sabre; both arms were widely used during the Civil War! Tonia will not only enjoy owning these artifacts from the war, but she'll also be utilizing them as she presents public school enrichment programs on the Civil War for children, grades 3 through 7. Tonia is also an active member of the North Carolina Tourism Council which is promoting Civil War sites in the state.

* Some years ago, Bob Cooke, RT member, purchased a group of Union soldier letters in a bookshop. Daniel Isaac Underhill of Long Island, NY enlisted in the Harris Light Cavalry (2nd New York Volunteers) in 1862. Soon he was writing letters home to his family. Dan participated in the great cavalry battle at Brandy Station in June, 1863 and was soon after wounded in the fighting at nearby Aldie, Virginia. His letters describe his battle experiences and his hospitalization. After recovering from his wound, Dan continued serving with the Harris Lights during the early months of 1865 up until Appomattox. In the summer of 1868, Dan was found unconscious in Central Park in New York City and died three days later. Ironically, after years of combat on horseback, he had apparently fallen from his horse during an evening ride. Bob researched Underhill's life and located his gravestone in an Oyster Bay, Long Island, cemetery. He's also written a biographical sketch on this Union cavalryman, *Daniel Isaac Underhill (1833-1868): A Soldier of the Harris Light Cavalry*.

* Look in the most recent issue of *North Carolina Historical Review* (No. 4, October 1996) for an interesting and lengthy article titled "Confederate Shipbuilding on the Cape Fear River." The article gives a good account of wartime ship-building activities at the Beery and Cassidey shipyards in Wilmington.

* An increasingly popular hobby for many CW students is that of "necrolithology," which involves tracking down burial places of Union and Confederate soldiers, especially officers. In 1985, Steve Davis of Atlanta began publishing *Grave Matters*, a newsletter for people hunting for burial sites of generals. The readership of the newsletter, published for six years, was around 300. Publication lapsed in 1991. However, Philip Arnold of Fallbrook, California, has now resumed publication of *Grave Matters* and has 250 subscribers. This quarterly newsletter, devoted primarily to the burial places of USA and CSA generals, is available at \$10.00 year from *Grave Matters*, 405 South Main Street, Fallbrook, CA 92028.

* The RT is planning a tour of Oakdale Cemetery to be led by Wayne Carver. We hope to plan this for a Saturday or Sunday in March, thereby giving an opportunity for an outing for members who are unable to travel to Virginia for the bus tour. The Oakdale tour will not be held, however, on the Virginia tour weekend (March 21-23), so that members can take in both tours if they want! The Oakdale tour will be a great follow-up to Wayne's program this month.

* Ted Lynch will once again offer raffle tickets on behalf of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table at the February 13 meeting. Several books, donated by Tom Broadfoot, of Broadfoot Publishing Company, will be raffled. Tickets are only \$1.00 each, the proceeds of which go to the Round Table.