

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

March, 1997

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

TOUR OF OAKDALE CEMETERY

March 15 Meeting

9:45 a.m.

As announced earlier, the members of the Round Table are invited to take a tour of Oakdale Cemetery, visiting the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers on Saturday morning, March 15, with Wayne Carver who presented our February program on the many Civil War personalities of the Lower Cape Fear area interred at Oakdale Cemetery. That program introduced members to numerous obscure, but important, local figures from enlisted men through coioneis who are buried at Oakdale. And we'll also see the gravestones of some of the well-known general officers.

Meet at the entrance to Oakdale Cemetery (at the end of 15th Street north of Market Street) at 9:45 a.m. We'll then begin the tour promptly at 10:00 and should be finished by noon. Rain date is Sunday, March 16, at 2:00 p.m. This will be a nice outing for everyone. Bring friends and family if you wish.

DR. JAMES MCCALLUM'S BOOK RECENTLY REPUBLISHED

Martin County During The Civil War

Jim McCallum, an active member of the RT who serves on the steering committee, authored *Martin County During The Civil War* in 1971. He completed this book after extensive research into Martin County, NC's contributions to the war effort. A notable achievement in Jim's research was his "discovery" of Fort Branch, a CSA earthwork fortification perched on the Roanoke River to guard against the approach of Federal gunboats. The site of Fort Branch was virtually lost to history until Jim found its location and, through years of effort and cleanup, preserved an impressive Civil War site that is appreciated to this day by many visitors.

Jim's excellent *Martin County*, a hardbound book of 188 pages, has been republished by the Martin County Historical Society. The book includes a survey of the county's history, wonderfully detailed service histories of every company raised in the county, and a good account of the fighting within the bounds of Martin county. Readers will also find a lengthy account of Fort Branch; a diagram drawing is included. Rosters and sketches of Martin County soldiers complete this CW history which is available through Fort Branch Battlefield Commission, Box 355, Hamilton NC 27840 at \$20.00 plus \$4.00 postage. Proceeds go towards the preservation of Fort Branch.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The RT year will close with two excellent programs! On Thursday, April 3, the RT will have a special meeting and reception featuring Chris Fonvielle as speaker. Chris will have on hand his new book, *Last Rays of Departing Hope: The Wilmington Campaign* for sale and for signing. In fact, Chris is honoring the Round Table by debuting his book at our April meeting which will be held in the Golden Hawk Room at Trask Coliseum! More about this in next month's newsletter. Then, on Thursday, May 8, we're fortunate once again to have Tom Prisk of Raleigh to present a fascinating program on the Generals, both Blue and Gray, and their personalities, careers and friendships before the war. Put both these events on your calendar!

WOMEN OF WILMINGTON

In addition to giving six of her sons to the cause of the Confederacy, Mrs. Armand J. DeRosset was endowed with such leadership and organizational abilities that it was often said of her, "She should have been a general!" Under her direction, the Soldiers' Aid Society in Wilmington was early organized, and for four years did its work with unabated energy. With the assistance of the women of Wilmington, large supplies were obtained, made and kept on hand. Canvas bags were made to be filled with sand and used in the fortifications of Fort Fisher. Canteens were covered, haversacks made, also cartridges for the rifles, and powder kegs for the great columbiads were made by the hundreds.

Mrs. DeRosset had a large room in her own home fitted up as a store room, seizing every chance to secure supplies through the blockade.

Mrs. DeRosset's ability to overcome difficulties in getting all she needed for the men was the constant wonder of those who assisted her. One example displays this. After the first attack on Fort Fisher, the garrison, in great peril, was to be reinforced with Junior Reserves. The wires brought the news that in a few hours they would arrive, hungry and footsore. When Mrs. DeRosset was asked if the ladies could feed them, the ready reply came, "Of course we can." And through the energy and resources of herself and assistants, she proved equal to the task.

In addition, they nursed through the harrowing scenes of hospital life and tenderly buried the dead. When all was over, the band of faithful women, in July, 1866, organized a permanent memorial association with the purpose of rescuing from oblivion the names and graves of the gallant soldiers who are buried in and near Wilmington.

(Compiled by Wayne Carver from *North Carolina Women of the Confederacy and Chronicles of the Lower Cape Fear River*).

SPRING BUS TOUR March 21-23

There are still a few seats remaining on the bus for the RT spring tour to Confederate Richmond and the Seven Days Campaign. Our plans are now to take a 23-passenger bus. Those signed up for the tour are: Bill Clark, Lee Johnston, John Krohn, Palmer and Mary Royal, Don Patience, Tonia Smith, Ed Russ, George Wolf, Gene and Jean Van Der Molen, Dan Geddie, Wayne Carver, and George Slaton.

This will be a super tour with Robert E. Lee Krick, a well-respected CW historian. Mr. Krick will give us an overview of the Seven Days Campaign on Friday night, then accompany us on Saturday to the several battlefields of the struggle between Lee and McClellan. On Friday afternoon and Sunday morning, we'll do a tour of Confederate-era Richmond. Those who take the tour will come home with a much richer understanding of this campaign which involved more total fighting men than any other campaign of the war. (I've personally taken this tour twice before with historians and can't get enough of it!)

So give it some further thought and consider joining the tour. Call Dan Geddie (H. 799-5338) or George Slaton ((O. 452-7370) and send in your check for sign-up. But hurry!

BATTLEFIELD LAND PURCHASE AT BENTONVILLE

The acquisition of ten key acres recently by the Bentonville Battleground Historical Association is highly significant because this portion of the field was the scene of the Grand Charge of Gen. William B. Taliaferro's South Carolina and Georgia Confederates against the Union 20th Corps commanded by Gen. Alpheus Williams. The tract of land lies directly behind State Historic Marker #10 which notes that the Confederates made five attacks against this Union position. As Mark Bradley writes, "For more than an hour, Taliaferro's men...charged into a 'leaden hailstorm' of Yankee bullets and shrapnel." This land is being transferred the State of North Carolina. You can join BBHA, Box 432, Newton Grove NC 28366 with a contribution of \$20. or more.