

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

May, 1997

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

UNION AND CONFEDERATE GENERALS: MEXICAN WAR CONNECTIONS May 8 Meeting

Thomas J. Prisk, a Licensed Gettysburg Battlefield Guide and member of the CFCWRT, will present our May 8 program! He will focus on the personal and professional military relationships of numerous Civil War generals, both North and South, who were senior U.S. Army officers during the Mexican War period. This is an area of pre-war history which is fascinating to those of us who have an interest in the lives and personalities of these men. The early experiences and relationships of these senior officers often prefigured the working relationships of those later generals who served in the same armies, as well as those who served on opposite sides in the conflict. We will learn about the dimensions of these friendships: pre-war cavalry, infantry, and artillery service, Mexican War decorations, West Point associations, wedding attendance and participation, and family connections.

Tom is an excellent and interesting speaker, and his past presentations to the RT have been well-attended. Tom, of course, has a particular expertise in Gettysburg history, but, since his move to North Carolina two years ago, he's also been researching NC Civil War history. Tom and his wife, Christine, live in Chapel Hill. He owns a company which provides computer training for industry.

Plan to attend this meeting, our last one until September, at 7:30 pm on Thursday, May 8, Room 132, Cameron Hall, at the UNC-W. Feel free to bring a friend!

JEFFERSON DAVIS VISITS WILMINGTON

It being understood that President Davis had left Charleston yesterday morning for Florence, our people looked for his arrival here about 7 or 8 o'clock last evening, and as a consequence, Market Street from the dock up to Second Street was filled by an immense concourse of people, while tar barrels and all other sources of illumination lit up the darkness. About 7 o'clock, a presidential salute from the guns of Southerland's Battery indicated the arrival at the depot of the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad of the President. He had been met on the road, we presume, by a delegation of the citizens, and was received at the depot by Gen. Whiting and staff, and by the mayor and a committee of citizens. As soon as the boat which conveyed him over the river touched the wharf on this side, a shout went up, and thus escorted by the authorities and accompanied by the people, President Davis proceeded to the residence of Gen. Whiting on Market Street below Second.

In a few minutes, the President made his appearance on the balcony, where he was welcomed in an appropriate manner by William A. Wright, Esq.

After his speech, a loud call was made upon Maj. Gen. Whiting who returned thanks for this evidence of regard, but insisted that he could not presume to address the audience after the able and eloquent speech of his Commander-in-Chief, President Davis. He could only pledge himself to do all in his power for the defense of Wilmington.

By nine o'clock, the street was cleared and the President left to rest and recruit himself. This morning, he accompanied Gen. Whiting down the river to examine the various works put up for its defense. (*Wilmington Daily Journal*, November 8, 1863)

PARTING SHOTS

Everyone agreed that our April meeting, featuring Chris Fonvielle and the debut of his *Last Rays of Departing Hope: The Wilmington Campaign*, was one of the best ever! We had the largest attendance in our history, with the exception of the band concert last year, ninety-five members and visitors. A dozen newcomers expressed interest in membership during the coming year. Many in attendance mentioned how much they enjoyed the social hour before the program. Our steering committee is trying to plan for more opportunities for future casual get-togethers.

As you know, Chris donated a portion of the proceeds of the book sale and signing to the RT. Our thanks to Chris for this contribution of \$180.00! Chris will have some remaining numbered copies of his book at the May meeting for sale and signing; once again he will donate \$3.00 from the sale of each book to the RT.

Many of you have asked about the Oakdale cemetery tour to be led by Wayne Carver. If his father's health stabilizes, Wayne will be at the May meeting and hopes to announce then an Oakdale tour on Saturday, May 10. (Hey, that's Confederate Memorial Day!) If the tour can't be held or if you're unable to go that day, Wayne plans to lead another Oakdale tour in the early fall.

One of the features of our May meeting will be the large display of photographs taken by Ed Gibson on our spring bus tour to Richmond and the Seven Days Campaign. Ed and his brother, Buzz Gibson, are veteran RT campaigners, having attended all the RT tours to date. Ed tells me that he has about three rolls of photos, so be sure to see them at the meeting. Many of you enjoyed seeing Ed Russ' photos from the tour at the April meeting. Maybe the display will convince more of you to go on our battlefield tour next year!

Some of you are taking other opportunities this spring to visit the battlefields or do CW research. John Krohn, Ted Lynch and Tom Prisk are going to Gettysburg for a two-day tour focused just on the second day's fighting in the Wheatfield! Dan Geddie recently visited Forts Pulaski and McAllister near Savannah and also did a walking tour of CW sites in the city. Bob Cooke is continuing his research on local CSA notable, Sewall Fremont; we hope Bob will share the results of his research with the RT. Tonia Smith is registered for the APCWS Conference in Hagerstown, Maryland. It's the 10th Anniversary of the founding of the preservation organization, and about 400 members from around the country have registered. Wayne Carver is ranging widely in his search for more Lower Cape Fear CW veterans and their burial sites. A couple of days ago, he was in Onslow County, tracking down the burial sites of veterans of the 3rd NC Cavalry which was raised in this area. Jim McCallum was thrilled to see his Confederate ancestor's photo in Chris' *Last Rays*. James Dallas Croom, Jim's great-grandfather, served in Co. B, 1st NC Heavy Artillery. We heard this week from Jerry Partrick, a founder of the RT. Jerry has recently moved to Chapel Hill where he lives within walking distance of the Southern Historical Collection at Wilson Library; the SHC is a major source of CW manuscript material. Jerry will be spending many hours researching his varied historical interests. Chris Fonvielle and George Slaton attended the 25th annual NVRHA Collectors' Show in Chantilly, Virginia. Chris signed copies of his book at the table of Savas Publishers. You'll remember that Ted Savas of San Jose, California, who also published Mark Bradley's book on Bentonville, was the speaker at our RT meeting in January. The NVRHA show is the oldest in the country, its first meeting was held in a fire station in 1972 in Fairfax, Virginia and was attended by many now old-time collectors. This show, having outgrown its second site in Fairfax, this year moved to a larger facility in Chantilly and doubled the exhibit tables available. Arrayed on dealer tables were CW documents, firearms, swords, uniforms, excavated relics, and other items for every level of CW collector. Tom Broadfoot of Broadfoot Publishing Company had his usual extensive stock of CW books available. The show location is situated near the site of the Battle of Chantilly which took place the day after Second Manassas, when Stonewall Jackson's corps pursued John Pope's retreating Union army.

In addition to Chris Fonvielle's busy April schedule which includes signings at area bookstores, Chris was a featured historian in a recent weekend tour held by the Civil War Education Association. He joined Mark Bradley, Mark Moore, and Ted Savas for a bus tour of the Averasboro and Bentonville battlefields. Then, the bus turned southward and brought the participants to Wilmington Campaign sites such as Fork's Road, Sugar Loaf, Forts Fisher and Anderson, and Town Creek. Chris says that the group was a determined bunch; they insisted on trudging through the rain for the 2.2 mile round trip to Sugar Loaf!

I've rambled on enough! Have a great summer and plan to join the Round Table in September for the 1997-1998 year. Look for the next newsletter in late August.