

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

November, 1996

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

THE UNION SIXTH CORPS IN THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN November 14 Meeting

Our speaker for November will once again be Tom Prisk of Chapel Hill. You'll remember Tom from the two captivating programs he presented last year on the Battle of Gettysburg. Tom is a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg, one of an elite corps of field historians whose encyclopedic knowledge of the battle is astounding.

Tom will trace the career of the Union Sixth Corps from June 3, when the Sixth Corps crossed the Rappahannock River in Virginia while on reconnaissance to ascertain whether Lee still held Fredericksburg in force, through its participation at Gettysburg on July 2 and 3, its leadership in the Federal pursuit of Lee on July 5 and 6, and then its further activities to July 14, 1863. The Sixth Corps is noted for its herculean 34 mile march in 18 hours from Westminster, Maryland to Gettysburg. Tom will examine the underappreciated role of the Union Sixth Corps in the campaign.

Also, Tom promises that he will entertain any queries that RT members have about any aspect of the Battle of Gettysburg. So, this is your opportunity to pose any unanswered questions you may have about this popular subject!

The meeting will be at 7:30 pm, Thursday, November 14 at UNC-W. See location below.

!!! NEW ROUND TABLE MEETING SITE !!!

This year, our monthly meetings will be held in Cameron Hall, Room 132, at UNC-W. Cameron Hall is located 200-300 hundred yards east (or behind) King Hall, where our meetings were held last year. Parking Lot R is just in front of Cameron Hall, while Parking Lot S is the next closest to our new location. The meeting room is semi-circular in shape with graduated rows which we hope will provide for greater camaraderie and discussion during our programs.

THE SEVEN DAYS CAMPAIGN Spring Weekend RT Bus Tour

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table is offering another spring weekend tour, again to one of the most important campaign sites of the Civil War. The Seven Days Campaign included the Battles of Beaver Dam Creek (or Ellerson's Mill), Gaines' Mill, Savage Station, Frayser's Farm (or Glendale), and the climactic Malvern Hill. The campaign represents CSA General Robert E. Lee's first experience as a commander of the Army of Northern Virginia as well as his successful bid to push USA General George McClellan's huge army away from the Confederate capitol at Richmond.

RT members will travel to Richmond by bus on Friday morning, spend two nights at the Sheraton Inn on Laburnum Road, and return to Wilmington on Sunday afternoon. Friday afternoon, Jim DuPriest, will guide us to important sites of Confederate-era Richmond. Friday evening dinner at the Sheraton will feature Robert E. Lee Krick, a well-known historian from the Richmond National Battlefield, who will give us an overview of the Seven Days. Then, we'll spend all day Saturday touring all the Seven Days' battlesites! Sunday, we'll tour more Civil War sites in Richmond, then head for home.

So mark your calendar for March 21-23, 1997. Details regarding costs and sign-up will be announced. This tour will be every bit as good as the one to Petersburg/Lee's Retreat last year!

THE BATTLE OF BRANDY STATION Your Chance to Save a Battlefield!

One of the most memorable experiences I've had personally in my pursuit of the Civil War was that of standing on the battlefield of Brandy Station in 1990, sharing a map of the field with James Ewell Brown Stuart, IV, the great grandson of the general himself. There we stood, looking to our right, where Stuart's legendary cavalry lined up by regiments to meet the Federal assault. The event was a weekend tour of Brandy Station/Cedar Mountain sponsored by the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS).

The Battle of Brandy Station, the largest cavalry battle ever fought on the North American continent, took place on June 9, 1863 near Culpepper, Virginia. It was a prelude to the Gettysburg campaign. Nearly 20,000 troopers from the commands of USA General Alfred Pleasanton and CSA General JEB Stuart clashed on the fields at Brandy Station. Though Stuart, after an all-day fight, managed to repulse Pleasanton's ambitious assault, many students of the war point to Brandy Station as the battle where the Union cavalry reached a parity with the heretofore dominant Southern cavaliers.

Well, the second Battle of Brandy Station, this one of nine years' duration, has just been fought and, thankfully, won, not by the North or the South, but by and for the whole nation!

This second battle was a harrowing experience. In 1987, a large portion of this pristine battlefield was bought by a California developer who planned a huge office/residential complex. When those plans began to fall apart, it appeared that the property would then go to an entrepreneur who wanted to develop a Formula 1 racetrack. All along, these efforts towards development, and of course, defacement, of this historic ground was resisted by the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) and the Brandy Station Foundation (BSF). Many CW enthusiasts felt the cause was hopeless.

Then, some weeks ago, an agreement was reached between APCWS and the developer! Brandy Station, comprising 1543 acres of threatened battlefield, was saved. The price, \$6.2 million, however, was high. To meet this challenge, APCWS has pulled out all the stops. First, it put together a consortium of farmers who will pay about \$3 million for about half of the property; the required easements will keep the land in permanent agricultural use which corresponds to the status of the land in 1863. Second, the Civil War Trust is expected to devote a grant to pay for a portion of the cost. Third, an anonymous donor, a Life member of APCWS, has agreed to match individual contributions up to \$500,000, providing a good start on the payments which will have to be made over the next three years to pay for the property.

Now, all of you know by now how unabashedly partial I am to APCWS. This national group, now headquartered in Hagerstown, Maryland has been the most successful preservation group in buying up and protecting CW battlefields. Founded in 1987, APCWS has participated in the acquisition of more than 5,900 acres of land, totaling more than \$14 million in value. Brandy Station is the 44th site acquired by APCWS. With over 10,000 members and such Board members as Katie Couric, Ted Turner, Ed Bearss, Dennis Frye, Robert Krick, Gary Gallagher, and James McPherson, this organization has been very aggressive and very successful in preservation. Its new Board Chairman, Tom Richards, was formerly the head of the Nature Conservancy, and brings years of experience and expertise to a continuing campaign to *Save the Battlefields!*

Here's your chance to participate in the success at Brandy Station as well as to join APCWS. APCWS has announced that, if you make a contribution of a minimum of \$50.00 by December 1, your check will be matched dollar for dollar by the aforementioned donor. And....you will receive a free one-year membership in APCWS!

Send any contributions to APCWS, Suite 200, 11 Public Square, Hagerstown, MD 21740. The phone number is (301) 665-1400.

I know that several of you are already members of APCWS, but friends, you're all needed in the front line to save Brandy Station!