

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

January, 1998

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

THE REGIMENT BAND of the 11th NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS

IN CONCERT AT THE UNIVERSITY CENTER, UNCW
Saturday, January 24
7:00-8:30 p.m.

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table is presenting this period band in concert for the enjoyment of RT members and the general public on January 24!

The band of the 11th North Carolina Regiment was re-activated in 1982 and took the field for the first time this century at a reenactment of the Battle of Bentonville. Since that time, the band has been in demand for other reenactments, balls, period church services, parades, formal concerts and numerous events consistent with its impression of a Confederate band of music from a NC regiment. Concerts have been presented at Manassas, Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, and Petersburg. The band has been involved in three movies, the most recent the TNT production, *Ironclads*. Other appearances have included the Confederate White House in Richmond VA and the morning service at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC.

The group dresses in replicas of uniforms known to have been worn by NC soldiers during the war and plays a mixture of original and replicated instruments of the period. It has one of the largest repertoires of period band music available and includes music both North and South.

Two Civil War authors from our Round Table will be present with their books for sale and signing. Wilbur Jones, author of *Giants in the Cornfield: The 27th Indiana Infantry*, will have this fine regimental history available. Chris Fonvielle, author of *Last Rays of Departing Hope: The Wilmington Campaign* will again give attendees the opportunity to purchase his history of the war in the Lower Cape Fear. Both authors will donate a portion of the sales of their book to the RT.

We hope that every RT member will come and bring family members. Plan to sell tickets to friends and to anyone who's interested in attending. This band provides a really wonderful performance! Coffee, punch, and dessert will be served after the concert.

Tickets are \$8.00 each, two for \$15.00, and are available at Hanover Iron Works, 1851 Dawson Street, or by mail at CFCWRT, Box 10535, Wilmington NC 28405. Tickets can be purchased at the door; however, you will help us estimate food count early by purchasing tickets beforehand.

Proceeds, after expenses, will be contributed to the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's effort to purchase 100 acres of battlefield property at Chancellorsville. (See article on page 3).

STEALING A MARCH

The RT has a great lineup of programs for Winter/Spring 1998. The February 13 program will feature Tim Bradshaw who will speak on the subject of the Charleston Campaign and Battery Wagner. Saturday, February 28 is the tentative date for an all-day bus tour of Wilmington Campaign sites to be led by Chris Fonvielle. The spring annual bus tour, March 20-21, will take us to Lexington, Virginia. Everard Smith, an authority on the Valley Campaign of 1864, will lead us in an overview of that clash between Early and Sheridan on April 9. And we'll wrap up the RT year on May 1 by enjoying an evening joint meeting, featuring Chris Fonvielle and Mark Bradley, and dinner with the Chicago Round Table on the *USS North Carolina*!

! SAVE CHANCELLORSVILLE BATTLEFIELD !

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) has signed a contract to buy a 100 acre tract at the heart of the Chancellorsville Battlefield for \$450,000. "This was our first real test of fire," said trust president Enos Richardson, referring the Fredericksburg group's first acquisition since it began operating early last year.

John Hennessey, assistant superintendent at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, said the federal government would not have been able to buy the land. He termed the acquisition "just magnificent." Hennessey said "the tract is the most visible, most developable piece of land on the Chancellorsville battlefield." He added that, with the rapid pace of development and escalating land prices in Spotsylvania County, "the preservation community is going to have once chance to get" such historic properties before they are developed.

The parcel of open ground extends south of Route 3 to McLaws Drive, a park road, and it abuts the park on the west. The trust intends eventually to donate it to the park. According to Noel Harrison, the park's cultural resources specialist, the tract is unlike almost any other on the battlefield in that all three significant phases of the battle are represented there.

On April 30, 1863, Union General Joseph Hooker seized the advantageous ground but abandoned it to the Confederates May 1. On May 2, Robert E. Lee directed feints across the property to draw attention from Stonewall Jackson's secretive, 12 mile flank march. Skirmishing grew so heavy that Confederate General Lafayette McLaws had to intervene, "coaxing" his men back, Harrison said, lest they brought on a general engagement.

And on May 3 there were repeated Confederate attacks through the area toward the Chancellor House. Park Chief Historian Robert Krick noted that Lee "personally directed the Southern units that fought across the ground, and gained what has aptly been called Lee's greatest victory."

Because of fast-moving development, particularly along the Route 3 corridor, the park is ranked seventh among National Park Service sites nationwide - and first in the region - in the need for land acquisition. Of the 8500 acres within the park boundary, fully 1500 are privately owned.

CVBT signed a contract to buy the land in late August, after several months of negotiations with the Roderick Ashley family. The \$100,000 down payment was raised from directors and members and includes a personal loan that will have to be repaid.

Richardson said raising the funds will be "a lot of hard work," but he said the price would have been even higher "if we had lost this property to another shopping center. I have no doubt in my mind that if we hadn't stepped in and bought this site now, it would have been lost forever."

The 100 acre site includes the ground over which the Confederate brigades of Posey, Semmes, Wofford, Mahone, Kershaw,, and Wright attacked the Union brigades of Greene, Kane, Candy, Caldwell, Brooke, and Zook. These units comprised troops from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Delaware on the Federal side and and South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia on the Confederate side. The site was central to Lee's efforts to focus Hooker's attention on McLaws' and Anderson's troops while Jackson made his celebrated march and flank attack.

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust was formed in January, 1997 by concerned citizens in the Fredericksburg area. Their first project was to preserve Willis Hill, a nine-acre tract which constituted the center portion of Marye's Heights and overlooks Sunken Road, the bulwark of the Confederate defensive position during the December, 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg. (*The Civil War News*, October 1997, reprinted by permission).

In December, the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table received a plea from historians Robert K. Krick and Edwin C. Bearss, through Civil War Round Table Associates, for contributions towards the purchase of the 100 acre tract at Chancellorsville. The RT steering committee voted to challenge our membership to raise \$1000.00 towards this effort. The proceeds, after expenses, from the January Band concert will comprise a portion of this total. Members are urged to make their own tax-deductible individual contributions to CVBT or to join CVBT. Contributions and memberships will all count toward the \$1000.00 goal. Contribution and membership forms will be available at the concert. Memberships are available at different levels, the basic one being the Annual Member at \$35.00. Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Suite 1, 604-A William Street, Fredericksburg VA 22401, can also be reached at Toll Free (888) 374-0900.

WILBUR JONES PUBLISHES REGIMENTAL HISTORY

Giants in the Cornfield: The 27th Indiana Infantry

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table is fortunate to have another published Civil War author in our ranks! Wilbur D. Jones, Jr., a Wilmington native, is a retired Navy captain who has written numerous books and magazine articles on military history and national defense issues. Wilbur retired as a professor at the Defense Systems Management College after 41 years at the Department of Defense. He served in political positions in the Nixon and Ford administration, serving as special assistant to President Ford.

Giants in the Cornfield adds a fresh dimension to CW literature with this extensive social study of the young, uneducated farmers of the 27th Indiana. The work focuses on the interactions of a single unit of Hoosier common soldiers: neighbors from the same county, village, and family. Wilbur weaves a special regimental personality, character, profile, and history by utilizing thousands of letters, official and family records, diaries and memoirs, to research soldiers' family and love life, morale, discipline, religion, morals, medical care, internal politics, camp life, guard duty, and POW experiences.

The army's tallest regiment, called *Giants*, the 27th Indiana gave and received ghastly casualties in Antietam's Cornfield on America's bloodiest day. Just four days before, members of the regiment had found General R.E. Lee's "Lost Orders." The 27th went on to fight in many major Eastern and Western battles, including Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Sherman's Atlanta Campaign. *Giants in the Cornfield* is a thoroughly researched and conclusive study of the life and culture of the Union common soldier.

Wilbur's *Giants* will be available at the concert. This is a great opportunity to purchase a signed copy of an excellent book for your CW library!

LEE AND JACKSON...LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA Spring Bus Tour

In keeping with our RT tradition of offering a weekend tour each spring, members will travel to Lexington, Virginia March 20-21 to see sites associated with both Lee and Jackson. Our bus will leave early Friday morning. In Lexington we'll see the Friday 4 pm parade of VMI cadets, tour the VMI campus and visit the museum where many of Jackson's possessions are on display, tour Lee's Chapel where Lee is interred and visit Lee's W & L College office. Our tour leader, Richard Lewis, will speak after dinner on Friday night. We'll tour Jackson's home and see the church where Jackson worshiped, as well as Jackson's grave in a cemetery where many CSA notables are also buried. Then we'll depart for Wilmington on Saturday at 5 pm.

The cost for the tour is \$175.00 (double occupancy) and \$205.00 (single occupancy). This will cover transportation, motel, three meals, and tour guide. You can sign up for the tour by giving your check to Dan Geddie, Treasurer, at a RT meeting or mailing it to him at Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, Box 10535, Wilmington NC 28405.

VICTORY AT MALVERN HILL AND GLENDALE Association for Preservation of Civil War Sites

"The largest private Civil War preservation effort in American history. No group or individual has attempted to save as many acres or raise as many dollars on behalf of a single acquisition without government assistance," exclaimed Edwin C. Bearss, former chief historian of the National Park Service, as he described APCWS's challenge to preserve two large and important sites of The 1862 Seven Days Campaign near Richmond. The Association for Preservation of Civil War Sites raised \$2,000,000 in four years to purchase 715 acres at Malvern Hill and Glendale (Frayser's Farm). This hallowed ground which saw the clash of armies in two separate engagements will be gifted to the American people (through Richmond National Battlefield Park).

UNITED CONFEDERATE VETERANS REUNION Wilmington NC 1916

In front of the City Hall, General Metts with Major H. A. London, his adjutant and chief of staff, of Pittsboro, and other staff officers, all in full dress uniforms of grey, which are so dear to them, reviewed the followers of the Confederate Generals Lee, Jackson, Stuart, Johnson, Hood, Longstreet and others, as they went past with uncovered heads as marks of respect for the commanding officers.

On the City Hall steps were hundreds of ladies and school children, who sang "The Old North State" and "Dixie" as the procession of cars containing the "Vets" went by.

Promptly at 10 O'clock the procession moved from Fifth and Market streets, where it formed, headed by General Metts and Major London, and passed down Market street to Front, up Front to Walnut, on Walnut to Third and on Third by the City Hall. Thousands of persons lined the sidewalks and lustily cheered the old soldiers as they passed along, most of them with happy smiles on their faces.

In the parade besides the veterans were the Daughters of the Confederacy with the sponsors and maids of honor here with the veterans and many sons of veterans.

In one of the automobiles were six veterans in their grey coats, each with an old rusty musket, while in another was a veteran who happily played upon a fiddle as the car which he was in passed up the street. All of them received loud applause.

Nearly the entire gathering of "Vets" boarded special cars last night at 7 o'clock and were taken to Lumina, Wrightsville Beach, where they were highly entertained by a committee of ladies headed by Mrs. Cuthbert Martin, chief marshal, who more than lived up to her reputation of handling such events.

As the veterans filed into the pavilion, which was prettily decorated with Confederate Stars and Bars, Stars and Stripes, and the North Carolina State flags, they were greeted by the State officers of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the matrons and maids of honor, and officers of the local UDC who were in the receiving line.

To the tune of old Southern melodies the veterans and Daughters of the Confederacy formed into line on the ball room floor and took part in a grand march. As the vets passed around there was cheer after cheer from the 2000 spectators.

Featuring the evening was an old-time square dance in which the veterans and a number of elderly and young ladies took part. There was a real figure caller on hand and when Don Richardson's orchestra struck up a real square dance tune the vets could not make their feet behave and several could not refrain from "cutting the pigeon wing." (*Wilmington Evening Dispatch*, July 27, 1916)

A PARTING SHOT

Several years ago I bought for my collection a Union soldier letter written from Chapel Hill NC on May 2, 1865. I knew that Chapel Hill had been occupied by USA General Smith Atkins' brigade of Kilpatrick's cavalry at war's end. In fact, during the weeks of occupation, General Atkins courted Eleanor Swain, the daughter of President Swain of the University of North Carolina. Their marriage caused a real scandal among the locals whose war-time animosities still burned bright. Anyway, I was curious to learn more about the writer of the letter.

I found Quincy A. Brown's military records at the National Archives. I discovered that he was a Sergeant in Company B, 9th Ohio Cavalry. I was surprised to learn that he was given his discharge in Concord NC, my hometown! It seems that the 9th Ohio Cavalry was transferred to Concord after its stint in Chapel Hill. It was easy to imagine Quincy riding about the streets of the little town where I grew up.

Sergeant Brown had, of course, participated in Sherman's March from Savannah GA into eastern NC. After arduous months of constant duty, he must have sensed that the war was winding down. He writes jubilantly, "our command left Mt. Olive on April 12, moving out on the Smithfield Road, then on the Raleigh Road, our advance driving the reb's Pickets. We heard the news of the fall of Richmond just as the rebs were making a stand with our advance. Our Colonel proposed three Cheers for the Success of our armies. The rebs heard our cheering and Lit out as fast as legs could conveniently carry them..."