

# Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

September, 1997

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

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## THE 425+ GENERALS OF THE CONFEDERACY Described, Categorized, and Analyzed

September 18 Meeting  
St. John's Episcopal Church

Who were these men, some of whom were immortalized and lionized in the mystique of the Lost Cause and some of whom faded forgotten into the past? Fame and notoriety, skill and incompetence, courage and cowardice, youth and old age, aristocrat and commoner, Southerner and Yankee, American and foreign, well-educated and poorly-educated, they are all represented in this group of 425 men. It is a group marked by contrast and diversity.

Harry Daniel, a member of the CFCWRT, has for many years researched the fascinating lives and fortunes of these Confederate commanders. He has traveled to their hometowns, visited their gravesites, and tracked their family connections, educational backgrounds, their pre and post-war careers. Harry's research has gleaned a wealth of knowledge and understanding, and his program will provide us with new perspectives about this group of men.

Harry, an ordained minister, is known throughout the Presbyterian Church in the southeastern states as a consummate teacher and Biblical scholar. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University following his undergraduate work at Davidson College, his seminary training at Columbia Theological Seminary, and graduate work at the University of Chicago. He has won numerous academic awards and honors and published a number of articles in scholarly journals. Harry has taught at three seminaries and served churches in Louisville and Paducah, KY, Decatur, GA, Auburn, AL, and is currently serving as Interim Minister at St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church in Wilmington.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Elebush Hall, is the location for our first meeting of the new RT year. Refreshments will be served at 7:00 pm, and the program will begin at 7:30 pm. The steering committee is experimenting with a new location for the RT monthly meetings. This particular location provides free and easy space for social time and refreshments before the program. Come early and chat with your friends!

St. John's Episcopal Church is located at 1219 Forest Hills Drive, on the corner of Park Avenue. Parking is available on the median along Park Avenue or on the grassy lawn on the north side of the church which is accessible through the paved parking area behind the church. Please do not park in the paved area! Enter Elebush Hall through the covered archway in front (west side) of the church.

### CUSHING FOR SALE!

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table will sell at the September meeting copies of the summer '97 issue of *Blue & Gray Magazine* featuring historian Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr.'s article "William B. Cushing: Commando at the Cape Fear." Although best known for sabotaging the Confederate ironclad *Albemarle* at Plymouth NC in 1864, Cushing spent most of his wartime service with the U.S. Navy's Wilmington blockading squadron. The audacious commando made several daring raids behind enemy lines at the Cape Fear and later played a key role in the Wilmington Campaign. Dubbed the "darling of the American Navy," Cushing emerged from the Civil War better known and more popular than most admirals. Copies of the magazine are \$5, with all proceeds donated to the RT.

## BOOK REVIEW

### THE WILMINGTON CAMPAIGN: LAST RAYS OF DEPARTING HOPE

Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr.  
Savas Publishing Company, 1997

There it was. It was as if I'd always known it would be there for me. Why had it taken so long?

I rounded one of the countless corners on the Appalachian Trail as it coursed through western North Carolina. What I saw was not a soul-stirring vista, although there are plenty to enthrall the eye. I didn't even come across a black bear, although I'm still anticipating my first ursine encounter.

And there it was. Almost hidden amongst the lush springtime foliage was a pink Lady's Slipper, a lone mauve sentinel in a sea of green.

As a boy growing up in woody northern Minnesota, I had memorized that the Lady's Slipper was the state flower. And in years of rounding countless woody corners, there and elsewhere, I had never seen one and had never really given it much thought. So here I was, face to face with a reality, which heretofore had been just a vague neural connection, stored away years before for perhaps some future resurrection. Should I take its picture? No, better to savor the moment. Better to, in the words of inveterate hiker Colin Fletcher, (*The Man Who Walked Through Time*), put it on the "emulsion of my mind."

The Appalachian Trail is only one of my current journeys. Equally enjoyable is my journey through Civil War literature. As on the trail, there are lots of literary flowers, most of them rather generic reds and yellows, each important but few spectacular. But then, I rounded the corner and there stands another of those mauve sentinels, surpassing in scholarship or in storytelling or in just the fine tuning of the English language, the more generic of the latest "definitive work." Civil War scholar, Wilmington native and fellow Cape Fear Civil War Round Table member Chris Fonvielle has added another Lady's Slipper to the bookshelf.

Cover up the author's name and open the book to any page. What you will find is "comprehensive but succinct, scholarly without being pedantic...compellingly readable." These are the very words from the New York Times Book Review of James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*. They also apply to Fonvielle's new book. Read on. You'll soon discover that this work is "a model of historical presentation of the American Civil War, worthy to stand alongside the great works of narrative history." These words come from the dust jacket of Shelby Foote's *Stars in Their Courses: The Gettysburg Campaign*. They also apply.

So what has author Fonvielle done to be placed with such lofty company? Simply stated, he has woven in a most compelling fashion the elusive mixture of primary source material, photographs (many previously unpublished), maps and diagrams into a narrative tapestry that holds the reader captive from the opening chase of the blockade runner *Advance* to gain the protective umbrella of Fort Fisher's batteries to the Stars and Stripes hanging in Thalian Hall. In places, the language is almost poetic, reminiscent of Boris Pasternak as Zhivago struggles in revolution-torn Russia. The narrative, a surely difficult undertaking when faced with stacks of notecards, flows smoothly and with sufficient intrigue and expectation to hold the reader in its grasp. In his Foreward, North Carolina author Mark Bradley sensed this too, when he wrote that "Chris' narrative pulls readers into his drama and transports them..." Not since *Killer Angels* have I sat at the feet of such a masterful storyteller.

Like most of you, I'm usually plowing through two or three Civil War books at any time. And usually, given my ploddingly slow reading speed, I calculate how many weeks it's going to take me to "get through this one." flogging myself through another "classic" that everyone else seems to have read. And then came *Last Rays of Departing Hope* and I found myself wanting to stretch it out, make it last longer, savor the moment and imprint it on the "emulsion of my mind." It's that kind of flower. You've seen all the others. Turn the next corner. It's waiting for you there.

-John R. Krohn

**NORTH CAROLINA: THE CIVIL WAR CONNECTION**  
**North Carolina Civil War Tourism Council**  
**Civil War Conference.....Wilmington NC**  
**September 26-28 1997**

The third annual Civil War Conference hosted by the NCCWTC will be held in Wilmington during the last weekend of September. This year's conference will feature the war in eastern North Carolina, the Wilmington campaign, and life in wartime Wilmington. Speakers include Rod Gragg (Fort Fisher) and Chris Fonvielle (Wilmington Campaign), David Long (Burnside Campaign), Robert Browning (North Atlantic Blockading Squadron), Steve Wise (Blockade Running into Wilmington), Beverly Tetterton (Social History of Wilmington and Women During the War), and John Haley (African-Americans in the Lower Cape Fear, 1861-1865).

The keynote speaker will be William C. Davis, who is one of the four or five leading CW historians in America. He has written numerous important books on the Civil War and is a speaker in great demand.

The cost for the full conference is \$125.00, but persons can also register for particular events which are priced individually. For a registration form and/or more information, contact Tonia J. Smith, 155 Woodland Drive, Pinehurst NC 28374, (910) 692-4934, or e-mail raegan@pinehurst.net or Chris Fonvielle, 792-9091.

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table will hold a Silent Auction on Saturday night to raise funds to cover a portion of the conference expenses.

We are indeed fortunate that our city is hosting this conference. It will further serve to highlight the significance of Wilmington during the war.

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**  
**Cape Fear Civil War Round Table**  
**1997-1998**

**October 21.** Craig Symonds, leading Civil War historian and author of the recently published *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War* will present a program on CSA General Patrick R. Cleburne at the Cape Fear Club where we will gather for a social hour and hors d'oeuvre beforehand.

**November 14.** RT Panel Discussion on *The Life and Service of Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson*, based on James I. Robertson's spectacular new biography of the general.

**November.** TBA Wilmington Campaign bus tour with historian, Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr.

**December 12.** Lauren Burgess, author of *An Uncommon Soldier*, will present *Women Soldiers of the Civil War*.

**January 24.** The 11th North Carolina Regimental Band will return for a concert at UNCW's University Union.

**February 12.** *The Charleston Campaign and Battery Wagner* will be the subject presented by author, Tim Bradshaw.

**March 20-21.** Spring Bus Tour to Lexington, Virginia. This exciting tour will take us to the Virginia Military Institute and its museum, Lee's Chapel, Stonewall Jackson's Home, Robert E. Lee's office at Washington and Lee College, and other sites.

**April 9.** Everard Smith will present a program on *Early and Sheridan: The Winchester Campaign of 1864*.

**May 14.** The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond will provide a program on *The Common Soldier*.

\*\*\*Note. Some of the dates listed above are subject to change. The meeting locations will be determined later and will be announced through the newsletter.

# JOIN THE CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

**!!! New Members Wanted !!!**

The RT ended its third year in May with 85 members. Current members are asked to send in their membership renewals as soon as possible.

Prospective members are also encouraged to join. The September and October newsletters will be mailed out to an additional 85 persons who have indicated some interest in the CW. We hope that all of you will consider joining us!

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, begun in 1994, is one of approximately 225 RT's across the country which are devoted to taking a serious look at fascinating CW topics. It's a non-partisan group which welcomes men and women with ties both North and South. Our membership reflects everyone from the casual reader to the inveterate researcher and author.

Since its inception, the RT has succeeded in bringing some top-flight Civil War historians to Wilmington for its monthly programs which are held from September through May. We've also enjoyed bus tours to such sites as the Wilmington Campaign, Bentonville, the Petersburg Campaign, the Seven Days Campaign, and Appomattox.

The coming year will feature more good speakers and tours. If you would like to know more about the RT, feel free to call any of the steering committee members listed below.

### Steering Committee 1997-1998

George Slaton, President & Newsletter Editor (O. 452-7370, H. 452-7448)

Chris Fonvielle, Vice President & Program Chairman (H. 792-9091)

Jim McCallum, Second Vice President (H. 686-1597)

Dan Geddie, Treasurer (H. 799-5338)

Tommy King, Tours (H. 762-2930)

Ed Gibson, Hospitality (H. 675-9717)

Ted Lynch, Raffle (H. 762-6445)

John Krohn (H. 799-6014)

James McLaren (H. 686-9359)

**PLEASE  
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE !**

Mail the form below along with \$20.00 membership fee (Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, Box 10535, Wilmington NC 28405) or present to Dan Geddie, Treasurer, at the next meeting.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone O \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Special Civil War Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Name & address of friend who might be interested in joining the RT \_\_\_\_\_