

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

April, 2000

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

BRITISH INTERVENTION IN THE CIVIL WAR

April 13 Meeting

St. John's Episcopal Church

Social Hour 7:00 pm.....Program 7:30 pm

We are indeed fortunate to welcome as our April program speaker a scholar who is traveling all the way from Canada to be our guest! Francis M. Carroll, Professor of History at St. John's College, University of Manitoba, will give a presentation on *British Intervention in the Civil War*.

Dr. Carroll and John Krohn, a member of the CFCWRT, have remained close friends since their childhood days in Minnesota. Dr. Carroll and his wife are visiting with John and Dorene Krohn.

Francis Carroll was educated at Carleton College (B.A.), University of Minnesota (M.A.), and Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland (Ph.D.). His long and eminent teaching career began in the United States and then culminated in a nearly thirty year tenure at the University of Manitoba from which he recently retired. He continues to hold the position of Senior Scholar at the University. He has authored nearly forty books, essays, and scholarly articles as well as numerous reviews of historical publications. Dr. Carroll's primary field of expertise is Irish-American diplomacy. John adds that, "as the commanding officer of a small sailboat on a northern Minnesota lake, Dr. Carroll has had a lifelong interest in naval history." He has researched and published on the legal claims arising from the activities of the famous raider, *CSS Alabama*.

We look forward to meeting Dr. Carroll and enjoying his presentation on a fresh and fascinating subject! Come early, bring a friend or two, and join other members for refreshments at 7:00 pm.

BATTLE REPORT

Beverly Tetterton's presentation at our March meeting on tracing Civil War ancestors was a comprehensive look at methods and resources of historical research and was illustrated memorably with an account of Beverly's own examination of the life of Colonel John Hedrick, a Wilmington native and CSA artillery officer who served in the Cape Fear District during the war. Beverly began with Hedrick's inscribed sword, which is in the Cape Fear Museum's collection, and then began the fascinating process of uncovering enough information about the colonel to create an interesting memoir.

Raffle prize winners were: Polly Rust (*Friendly Fire in the Civil War* donated by Palmer and Mary Royal), Richard Triebe (*Gettysburg: Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill* donated by Mrs. Ted Lynch in memory of her husband), Palmer Royal (*Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War* donated by Mrs. Ted Lynch in memory of her husband), Jim McCallum (*Civil War Times* magazines donated by Mrs. Ted Lynch in memory of her husband), and Polly Rust (*Flags of the Confederacy* donated by Cape Fear Civil War Shop). Thanks to everyone who participated in the raffle which brought in \$98.00

A hearty welcome was extended to David Heard who attended the meeting and joined the Round Table!

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES CAVALRY

Cavalry was of little value during the Colonial wars with the French and Indians due to the denseness of the wooded areas and lack of roads in America. During the early portion of the Revolutionary War, the Americans were completely ignorant of the value of mounted troops. Only after several defeats in New York did Congress, in 1777, authorize the formation of four regiments of dragoons which were modeled on the European pattern. These regiments were each composed of six troops with a total authorized strength of 279 men and officers. They were armed with heavy sabers and flintlock pistols carried in saddle holsters. In 1780, after the British proved the value of cavalry in South Carolina, small mounted units sprang up spontaneously. These mounted bands of rarely over a hundred white and/or black men, owning their own horses and rifles, would approach the enemy, dismount, and leave their horses in a secure place with a few comrades. They would attack and, whether victorious or defeated, would hurry back to their horses and quickly ride away. After the surrender of Cornwallis in 1781, the American cavalry faded away to near non-existence until 1832 when the "Mounted Rangers" were reinstated to fight the Indians and Mexicans. The Mounted Rangers were composed of six companies (the term "troop" was dropped and not revived until after the Civil War) with a total strength of 685 men.

The next year, 1833, Congress increased this mounted body to a regiment and called it the 1st Dragoons. Henry Dodge of Michigan was the colonel, Stephen W. Kearny of New Jersey was the lieutenant colonel (he was the uncle of Major General Philip Kearny who was killed in 1862 at the Battle of Chantilly), and Richard B. Mason of Virginia was the major. Nathan Boone, a son of Daniel Boone, was a captain commanding one of the companies. Among the lieutenants of this regiment were Jefferson Davis (afterwards President of the Confederacy) and Philip St. George Cooke of Virginia (later a major general in the Union Army during the Civil War, considered the "grand old man of the cavalry," and was the father-in-law of J.E.B. Stuart). During the early 1840's, the 1st Dragoons was the only mounted unit in the U.S. Army. It had an authorized strength of 750 men, all well-mounted in companies of matched horses (white, sorrels, grays, blacks, bays, and creams) superbly equipped, and armed with a breech-loading, smoothbore carbine of .69 caliber (the first percussion arm in the service) especially made for this regiment by Simon North of Millerstown, Connecticut.

In 1836, another mounted regiment, the 2nd Dragoons, were authorized by Congress primarily to fight the Seminole Indians in Florida. Due to the terrain, they fought as infantry until they were remounted in 1844 and moved to the Western Territories. Congress authorized the formation of the Mounted Rifles in 1846 for the purpose of guarding the Oregon Trail, but this mission was waived with the advent of the war with Mexico. The Mounted Riflemen, having refilled their ranks depleted by the Mexican War, rode westward in 1849 to establish a chain of posts along the Oregon Trail under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Wing Loring (a future Confederate general who was born in Wilmington NC in 1818).

Congress, in March 1855, authorized two new mounted regiments, but to confuse things even more they were named the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments. Now is perhaps a good time to contrast the three different mounted units. Dragoons were basically mounted infantry. They carried a shoulder weapon known as a musketoon (a shortened musket) in their early days and later carried carbines. Their horses were used primarily to move rapidly from one place to another and not for fighting. Most, if not all, of the fighting was done dismounted. The major difference between the Dragoons and the Mounted Riflemen was armament. The Mounted Riflemen carried long-barreled muskets or rifles. The Cavalry (sometimes called Light Cavalry) served an entirely different purpose. It was primarily intended to scout and screen an army's advance and to do its fighting mounted with sabers and pistols.

Jefferson Davis was the Secretary of War under President Franklin Pierce at the time these cavalry units were organized and was afterwards accused (probably falsely) by his enemies of packing these new regiments with his favorite officers who later went with the Confederacy. The first colonel of the 1st Cavalry was Edwin Vose Sumner of Boston and the two majors were John Sedgwick of Connecticut and William H. Emory of Virginia (who had written a report of General Philip Kearny's march to the

Pacific and later acted as "astronomer" in running the boundary line with Mexico after the peace in 1848 and again in 1853 for the Gadsden Purchase). George B. McClellan of Pennsylvania, later commander of the Army of the Potomac, was a captain. All of these officers remained loyal to the Union. However, the lieutenant colonel was Joseph E. Johnston, and J.E.B. Stuart was a captain; both of these Virginians rose to high rank in the Confederate army.

With the 2nd Cavalry, which was called "Jeff Davis' Own," it was a more one-sided story. The colonel was Albert Sidney Johnston of Kentucky, the lieutenant colonel was Robert E. Lee of Virginia, Earl Van Dorn of Mississippi was brevet major, Edmund Kirby Smith of Florida was a captain, Theodore O'Hara of Kentucky (wrote the poem "The Bivouac of the Dead," and later served on A.S. Johnston's staff) was a lieutenant, as were Charles E. Travis of Texas (son of William B. Travis, the hero of the Alamo), John B. Hood of Kentucky, and Fitzhugh Lee of Virginia (a nephew of Robert E. Lee). All of these officers except Travis won fame in Confederate service.

After the fall of Fort Sumter in 1861, President Lincoln issued a call for volunteers and ordered an increase in the regular army to include another mounted regiment, the 3rd Cavalry. David Hunter (he presided over the court-martial of Fitz John Porter and the Lincoln conspirators - by design to secure guilty verdicts - and ordered the burning of V.M.I.) was appointed colonel and William H. Emory (of border surveying fame) the lieutenant colonel.

On August 3, 1861, Congress passed a bill organizing all the mounted troops - dragoons, mounted riflemen, and cavalry - into one branch, all to be called cavalry and to be numbered by seniority:

<u>Original Name</u>	<u>Date of Origin</u>	<u>New Name</u>
1st Dragoons	1832	1st Cavalry
2nd Dragoons	1836	2nd Cavalry
Mounted Riflemen	1846	3rd Cavalry
1st Cavalry	1855	4th Cavalry
2nd Cavalry	1855	5th Cavalry
3rd Cavalry	1861	6th Cavalry

The Cavalry yellow was designated as the color of the new corps, and the facings of the other uniforms -orange for the dragoons and green for the riflemen - were ordered to be changed accordingly. These six regular cavalry regiments were soon swamped by a deluge of volunteer mounted regiments which brought the strength of the Union cavalry to about 80,000 men by the end of the war.

During the Civil War, the regular mounted troops served with distinction. The 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th Cavalry regiments were brigaded together as the Reserve Brigade, First Division of the Cavalry Corps in the Army of the Potomac, serving under Wesley Merritt, John Buford, and Alfred Pleasanton. The 6th Cavalry was decimated on July 3, 1863 during an engagement with W.E. "Grumble" Jones' Brigade at Fairfield (Millerstown), Pennsylvania. The 3rd Cavalry Regiment was assigned to General John A. Logan's XV Corps headquarters, Army of the Tennessee. Also serving in the Western Theater, the 4th Cavalry served in the First Brigade, Second Division, Army of the Cumberland.

Following the War Between the States, the mounted regiments fought with honor and with pride in all the wars, hostilities, insurrections and (in the case of Pancho Villa) invasion. General "Black Jack" Pershing was the last to lead a large body of mounted troops into a military engagement. Though the last "horse cavalry" unit was not disbanded until 1942, the horse soldiers were through. No troop horses were taken to France; some of the cavalry rode patrol in the Philippines during the war; some were dismounted and used in France for military police and similar duties. No horses went to the Second World War either, though the troopers drilled on horseback daily until they went overseas, and saber charges were practiced.

The screening and intelligence functions of the horse soldiers had been taken over by aviation; the ride to the battle to fight dismounted was done in a truck, tank, half-track, glider or helicopter. The Cavalry name is still carried on! In World War II, light armored or tank outfits had the old horse designations; in the Vietnam struggle the 1st Cavalry was airborne infantry.

What happened to one of those very early mounted regiments, Wilmington's own William Wing

Loring's first command? The Mounted Riflemen originated in 1846 became the 3rd Cavalry in 1861. Among its Civil War duties, the regiment served in Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama. During the Spanish American War, the Third led the attack up San Juan Hill, and it went to Europe during World War I. As machines replaced the horse, the regiment became the Third Armored cavalry. Following in Loring's footsteps, George S. Patton served as colonel of the Regiment during the 1930's (in 1862, Patton's grandfather, George, briefly served under Loring in West Virginia). During World War II, the Third Armored Cavalry became the first element of Patton's Third Army to cross into Germany. More recently, this regiment played a major role in Desert Storm.

Though the years and the battles change, the courage, duty and honor of the "old horse regiments" live on unblemished. Viva les chevaux!

- Jim McCallum

ROUND TABLE ELECTION AT MAY MEETING President and Vice President

After six years of service as president and newsletter editor, I will be stepping down from the role of president as the current RT year ends next month. At the May 11 meeting, the membership will hold an election for a new president and a new vice president.

If you would like to submit your name or the name of a fellow RT member (all members are eligible) for either office, please contact the Nominations Committee composed of Tommy King (O. 763-7318) Chairman, and Jim McCallum (H. 686-1597).

The Steering Committee has nine seats, seven of which are occupied. The two new officers will join the Steering Committee. If a current Steering Committee member is elected, then an additional person will be elected to fill the ninth seat.

We hope that you will give careful thought to any nomination you make. Both president and vice president will have considerable responsibility. Presiding at meetings, leading and moderating the Steering Committee, co-ordinating RT events, public relations, and being available to answer questions and provide information to members and visitors - these are some of the responsibilities involved. Of course, the hard-working members of the Steering Committee also share much of the work of the officers, so neither position is a lonely one! I will be happy to provide as much guidance and orientation as new officers desire.

The Steering Committee welcomes your nominations. *Please submit names before the end of April.* We want our membership to continue to grow and we want more and more of you to participate in carrying forward the tradition of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table.

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A PARTING SHOT

We ar her in the edge of Petersburg in our ditches and the yankees strong entrenched in three hundred yards of us they ar shelling the city all to peicis Grant has sent in for a serrender of the City too or three times but Boragards reply was he would burn the town & fite him over the ashes I don't know what will be the concequence but if they would feed us an the yankes will charg our work we will not only cover the ground but we will pile them up Shore...

(So wrote a hopeful James Washington Calton, 56th North Carolina Regiment, to a family member on July 6, 1864. The letter, in the collection of the NC Division of Archives in History, is quoted in *North Carolina Troops: 1861-1865*, Volume 13, ed. Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., NCDAH, Raleigh 1993)