

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

January, 2000

NEWSLETTER

Editor: George Slaton

BERMUDA HUNDRED THE CAMPAIGN OF LOST OPPORTUNITIES

January 13 Meeting
St. John's Episcopal Church
Social Hour 7:00 pm.....Program 7:30 pm

Guest program speakers, Jerry Netherland and Mark Jacobson of Chester, Virginia, will introduce us to the Bermuda Hundred Campaign, a subject they've been researching intensively for six years with the plan of eventually publishing a campaign study.

Jerry has a B.S. in Administration of Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University. He's a ten year veteran with the Chesterfield County Police Department. He's also a member and past President of the Richmond Civil War Round Table. Jerry currently lives between the defense lines on Bermuda Hundred, and it is this close proximity that has sparked his interest in the 1864-1865 campaign.

Mark, a graduate of the College of William and Mary with a degree in Business Administration, is an accounting supervisor with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. A native of Fayetteville NC, he's an active member of the Richmond Civil War Round Table. His interest in the Civil War stems from his descendance from three North Carolina veterans of the war.

This RT program year is unique in that we have planned a monthly program to introduce us to the campaign site we'll be visiting for our Spring Weekend Tour, March 24-26. The visit to the Bermuda Hundred area will be an initial one for many of our members.

In the spring of 1864, USA General Ulysses Grant planned to drive Lee's army south toward Richmond. The battles at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania were his initial thrusts. Grant proposed, as a second feature of his overall strategy to tighten his vise on Lee and the city of Richmond, to land the Army of the James, 39,000 strong, commanded by USA General Ben Butler on the peninsula between the James and Appomattox Rivers just fifteen miles south of Richmond. Butler was to proceed north and besiege or capture Richmond.

CSA General PGT Beauregard, in command at Petersburg, rushed forces under CSA General George Pickett to halt Butler's progress. Pickett handled his assignment well, and Butler decided to entrench. Soon Beauregard himself arrived at the Drewry's Bluff defensive line where he counterattacked, stopping Butler's forays. Beauregard effectively "bottled up" Butler and held the line against Union troops for the remainder of the war. Many men from the ranks of the Army of the James served in the Wilmington Campaign less than a year later.

To prepare for the program and the spring tour, you may wish to read *Back Door to Richmond: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign April-June 1864*, by William Glenn Robertson (LSU Press, 1987), an excellent history of the struggle south of Richmond between the armies of Beauregard and Butler.

NORTH CAROLINA AND THE CIVIL WAR Museum of History Exhibit

On September 17, the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh opened an exhibit that tells the stories of North Carolinians who lived, served and sacrificed during the nation's bloodiest conflict. *North Carolina and the Civil War* brings these stories to life by showcasing personal belongings, photographs, military items and close-up accounts of Tar Heels who endured the conflict.

In addition to information about many North Carolinians, the exhibit follows the dramatic wartime experiences of fifteen selected individuals. Museum visitors will meet these North Carolinians in the exhibit's introductory section, examine their wartime ordeals within the exhibit and learn of their fate in the concluding area. These highlighted North Carolinians include Orderly Sergeant Alfred May, the son of a prosperous Pitt County landholder; Abraham H. Galloway, a slave from Brunswick County who escaped to Canada and returned to NC during the war; and Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, a staunch secessionist who lived on Looking Glass Plantation in Halifax County.

The 3500 square foot exhibit guides visitors from prewar North Carolina to the return of peace in 1865, highlighting the diverse roles North Carolinians played both in battle and on the home front. It also includes depictions of a soldier's life in camp and battle, wartime industries, struggles at home and the uncertainties of postwar life. *North Carolina and the Civil War* explores the experiences of some 15,000 white and black North Carolinians who served in Federal regiments as well.

"Most natives and newcomers will likely be surprised to discover that North Carolina furnished four white and four black Federal regiments during the war," says Tom Belton, curator of military history.

Three hundred and fifty-eight artifacts serve as vivid reminders of this pivotal period in our state's history. The items range from a split-oak cotton basket used by slaves in Rowan County to Confederate soldiers' weapons and a captured Union flag. Many of the exhibit's flags and uniforms have undergone extensive conservation, such as the 6th Regiment N.C. State Troops' flag made from a silk shawl and the bloodstained, war-torn vest of Major John Thomas Jones of the 26th Regiment N.C. State Troops.

The collection of photographs in the exhibit reveals the true picture of life throughout the war for many North Carolinians. Here, in black and white, the faces of young and old soldiers, freed slaves, and husbands and wives show determination, joy, fear, homesickness and grief.

Two computer stations in the exhibit gallery provide additional information about the war. Museum-goers can use the touch screens to discover more about the museum's extensive collection of Civil War flags, explore military information in further detail, or test their Civil War knowledge in a trivia quiz.

The NC Museum of History is located in downtown Raleigh at 5 East Edenton Street. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday 9 am til 5 pm and Sunday 12 noon til 5 pm. Phone is (919) 715-0200.

--News Release, North Carolina Museum of History

THE MANY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Cape Fear Museum Symposium

Saturday, January 22

The conflict that divided the United States between 1861 and 1865 goes by many names and has many interpretations. Differences about the war started before the war ended; what caused it, why battles were lost and won, and so on. Even today, people debate issues about the war, and no doubt, these discussions will continue well into the new century.

Who deserves a monument on today's hallowed battlefields? What role do women play in discussions about the war? How accurately does Hollywood portray the conflict? Where do African Americans fit into the four years of hostility and its aftermath? What does it all mean to the United States today?

On Saturday, January 22, from noon until 5:00 pm, speakers will examine many opinions about the Civil War at a symposium which brings together several schools of thought on the subject. Speakers include Dr. John Coski, Director of the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond and moderator of the symposium; Dr. Robert Toplin, UNC-W History, on how the war is portrayed in media and film; Dr. John Haley, UNC-W History, on the African American experience; Ms. Brenda Kean, independent scholar, on women's role in the war; Mr. John Goode, site manager at Bentonville Battlefield, on challenges faced by historic sites when interpreting the war; Mr. Gregg Clemmer, Chief Historian of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, on all things Confederate.

The symposium concludes at the historic Bellamy mansion with a grand reception complete with Civil War reenactors and notable personalities from the "Late Unpleasantness." Fee for the entire day includes free admission and a tour of the Civil War galleries at Cape Fear Museum, free admission to the Bellamy Mansion, lectures and private reception. CFM Associates members and Friends of the Bellamy Mansion Museum \$20 and non-members \$25. Call the Cape Fear Museum to register. Space is limited. Phone 341-4350.

THE CIVIL WAR ON THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST

Crystal Coast Civil War Symposium

Saturday, January 29

This event is sponsored by the Carteret County Historical Society and Carteret Community College. Speakers are Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Dr. David Long, Mr. Paul Branch, and Mr. Kim Kimball. Location is Joslyn Hall, Carteret Community College, Morehead City NC. A lunch and reception/book signing are included in the registration fee of \$30. Seating is limited. For more information, contact Andrew Dupstadt, Executive Director, CCHS, at (252) 247-7533 or cchs@clis.com.

BATTLE REPORT

The antebellum Christmas Open House at the Bellamy Mansion, held Friday evening, December 10, was a splendid occasion, attended by approximately one hundred RT members and their guests! The 1860's period music presented by *Southern Horizon* carried us back to the Civil War years. One unexpected feature of the evening was the attendance of several reenactors. Randolph and Becky Sawyer of Wilmington reenacted a soldier in the 6th Wisconsin and a civilian, respectively. Perhaps the real hit of the evening was the serendipitous attendance of reenactors, Paul and Janine Stier. Paul and Janine first met at a reenactment some time ago. Paul, a reenactor with the 3rd US Regulars Infantry, wandered over one evening to the camp of Janine's 27th Virginia where she reenacted as a CSA civilian. It seems Paul found the Southern camp to be more lively than his own. A real life courtship ensued, and the couple came to Wilmington on their honeymoon. On Friday, just hours before the Open House, Janine and Paul were touring the Bellamy Mansion and learned about the festivities planned by our Round Table for that very evening. So they dressed in their finest period attire and joined us. Paul, as a 3rd US Regular, and Janine, as a belle of the 1860's, the North and South come together, danced almost the entire evening to the tunes of *Southern Horizon*!

Our special thanks to Tommy King for his efforts in planning the Open House! We're also grateful for the financial sponsorship of Tommy's company, Hanover Iron Works, which gave significant support for the event. And we express our appreciation as well to Tommy and Ann King, Wayne and Bernice Carver, Mike and Karen Budziszewski, and Joyce Binkley for generously preparing and serving all the delicious homemade refreshments! And a hearty welcome to new and first-time member, Don Hessenflow!

A PARTING SHOT

Soon the Yankee batteries ceased firing and we heard shouting behind us where our line lay across the road. I caught the words "look out, he's coming!" ...There was a straight stretch of road behind us, and there came in sight a magnificent bay horse running at top speed, with a Yankee officer lying down in the saddle with his head well down beside the horse's mane on the side toward Patterson. ... I shot after he had passed Patterson, waiting just enough to insure that Pat was not in range, and on the instant Pat shot.

On plunged the horse while the officer did not change his position. As they came more out into the open, there were several shots fired, but the horse kept on running, and the man kept in the saddle until they passed out of sight on the Yankee side of the creek. Had we all missed so large an object as a man and a horse, and at such such short range? ...I shot to kill as was my duty. Yet I hope in my heart that the man and the horse got through without a scratch. It was such a courageous dash in the face of such fearful odds.

Then we heard a sound in the woods occupied by the Yanks, as of a mighty rushing wind. As it drew nearer we could distinguish the clang of accoutrements and the voices of the officers shouting, "Steady men. Keep your places." There came into view the magnificent spectacle of a heavy line of infantry moving down in the open toward us. Our batteries opened with shrapnel, we opened with rifles, yet on they came and got to the creek before they broke.

They rushed pell-mell back to the woods, leaving many dead and wounded on the field. Then we saw three men come running from the woods toward us. They had no weapons. Word was passed along our lines not to shoot. The three men ran down to the creek and picked up a man from off the ground and went as fast as they could with their burden back to the woods. We cheered. The old field was well sprinkled with little heaps of Yankee blue uniforms. In some places singly, and in some places in piles. It is strange how small and insignificant a dead man appears on a battlefield. The line of Yanks never came out of the woods again.

Private David Holt, 16th Mississippi, CSA
A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia (LSU Press, 1995)