

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

November 2001

Newsletter

Editor: Bob Cooke

November 13 Meeting, St. Andrews On-The-Sound Episcopal Church
Social Hour, 7:00 p.m., Program, 7:30 p.m.

Cushing Returns To The Cape Fear!

[Due to a scheduling conflict, Will Green will be unable to address our November meeting]

On Tuesday, November 13, our speaker will be Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr. who will speak on "The Life and Times of Lt. Cmdr. William B. Cushing." Cushing emerged from the Civil War better known than any U.S. Navy officer except Admiral David G. Farragut. The bold and brazen sailor (one of Lincoln's favorites), was the precursor of unconventional, commando type warfare. Dr. Fonvielle has termed him an early Navy Seal! A respected naval commander as well as a popular celebrity, Cushing was best known for destroying the Confederate ironclad *Albatross* in 1864. But he spent most of his wartime career with the Cape Fear Blockading Squadron off Wilmington. Dr. Fonvielle will talk about Cushing's exciting life, career and tragic end. He will have copies of his books for sale and signing.

Dr. Fonvielle is the author of several books, including *The Wilmington Campaign*, *Last Rays of Departing Hope* and *Fort Anderson*, as well as numerous magazine and newspaper articles. He received his M.A. in American History at East Carolina and his Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina. Chris currently teaches (History, of course!) at U.N.C. Wilmington and is also the current President of our Round Table.

At our last meeting, Dr. Harry Daniels spoke of his twenty years of collecting "stuff" about Confederate Generals. According to Dr. Daniels, there were 425 men who attained the rank of Brigadier or higher. As he pointed out, it is interesting to note that many of the men initially promoted met President Jefferson Davis' important criteria. They were West Pointers (as he was) who fought in the Mexican War (as he had) and most of them had remained in the United States Army (Davis had been Secretary of War under Pierce) until secession. Several were political appointees, but these were the exception. Towards the end of the War, many of the promotions were made by battlefield performance (and through attrition). He noted the difference between Davis and Lincoln; Lincoln learned and grew during the war, Davis remained Davis.

Several of his favorites were discussed and he noted that of the 425, there were 12 sets of brothers and 27 sets of brothers-in law, which made for quite a network of social interactions! It was a little difficult to pin Dr. Daniels down to one favorite, but he indicated that it might be Patrick Clairbourne. He also stated that it was probably North Carolina that produced the best Generals! When one thinks of Hoke, Hill, Pender or Pettigrew we must agree. But then, he had to bring up Braxton Bragg!

The raffle winners were: Steve Gunter, Smoker/Grill Set; Dr. John Krohn, magazines;

Palmer Royal, *Bloody Hill* (by William Brooksher); Sylvia Bellows, *Vicksburg* (by Susan T. Puck);

The set of flag pins were won by Vesta Burroughs, Ed Russ and Ed Gibson.

Thanks to David Barefoot, also a winner!

Revised Program Schedule
(The Second Tuesday of the Month)

December 11	Southern Military Academies	Rod Andrew, Jr.
January 8	<i>C.S.S. Neuse</i>	Andrew Duppstatd
February 12	Gettysburg	Dr. John Krohn
March 21-24	Gettysburg Tour	Dr. John Krohn
April 9	Civil War Prisons	Lonnie Speer
May 7	TBA	TBA

Spring Trip

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, space on our Spring trip is limited to 45 persons. So, if you are going, please reserve a place by sending thirty (\$30) dollars to Dan Geddie. The total cost is \$150 (you make your own hotel reservations, \$57 per night, plus tax) and can be paid in installments if preferred. Final payment must be made before February 20 (2002). There are already about 15 people who have signed up!

Updates

We will shortly be working on one of the most important Civil War sites in the area. Our Round Table will be going to Ft. Anderson to do restoration work and the date will be announced at our next meeting. This Brunswick County site, which figured prominently throughout the war, as a quarantine station as well as in defense of Wilmington is fast becoming one of the largest tourist draws in the area. Let's see if we can get it back to its former glory!

Tidbits

From the *Morning Star*, January 3, 1872 :

A War Incident

An old claim, arising from the war, was settled yesterday in a somewhat unusual manner. While an officer in the army, nearly ten years ago, Gov. Warmouth was passing a farm house and saw grazing in the yard a very beautiful horse. As "impressment" on such occasions was allowable in the service, he appropriated the animal to his own use, and rode it during his stay in the army. When he quit the service the horse was turned over to the quartermaster. But the Governor says his conscience always reproached him for the act, and a year ago he caused inquiries to be set on foot which resulted in ascertaining the name of the owner of the horse and his present residence. A correspondence was then commenced, the Governor frankly acknowledging that he was the culprit, and expressing a desire to pay for the animal. Several letters passed and finally a price was agreed upon, and yesterday the Governor forwarded to Mr. Freckland a check for \$300, that amount being considered an equivalent for his war charger.—

N.O. Picayune

From the *Daily North Carolinian*, January 26, 1865 :

One wit described the war as hard tack for the soldiers and hard taxes for the citizens.

Artemus Ward

Storm in the Mountains

That is the title of a book I recently read (and enjoyed). It concerns the Civil war in the western part of North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. The book is subtitled *Thomas' Confederate Legion of Cherokees and Mountaineers* (authored by Vernon H. Crow) and chronicles the Legion throughout the war. There is one page in the book devoted to the heroics of a man named James Keelan.

East Tennessee in late 1861 was a hotbed of activity. Confederate troops that had been stationed there to quell any Union partisans that might show themselves, had recently been sent away. There were many such sympathizers in the area and as Federal activity increased, it emboldened many to strike a blow for their beliefs. One such movement involved the burning of railroad bridges and to prevent this, guards were stationed at the most vulnerable sites. Keelan was placed at the structure which spanned the Holston River, at the Strawberry Plains depot (northeast of Knoxville). Union General Ambrose E. Burnside called this bridge, some 1,600 long the "most important on the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad."

Total darkness and silence descended as he stood at his post, but around ten p.m. a band of Unionists approached the bridge:

While the others kept a lookout Pickens [one of the Unionists] and a man named Montgomery scrambled to the top of the embankment. The night was black, so Pickens lit a match to see his way. No sooner had he struck the match than the report of a pistol was heard. Pickens fell to the timbers wounded. In a moment Keelan sprang upon the injured saboteur but Montgomery, realizing his comrade was about to die, jumped on Keelan, slashing the guard with his knife. While they struggled on the embankment....lights began to appear in [in a nearby house.]

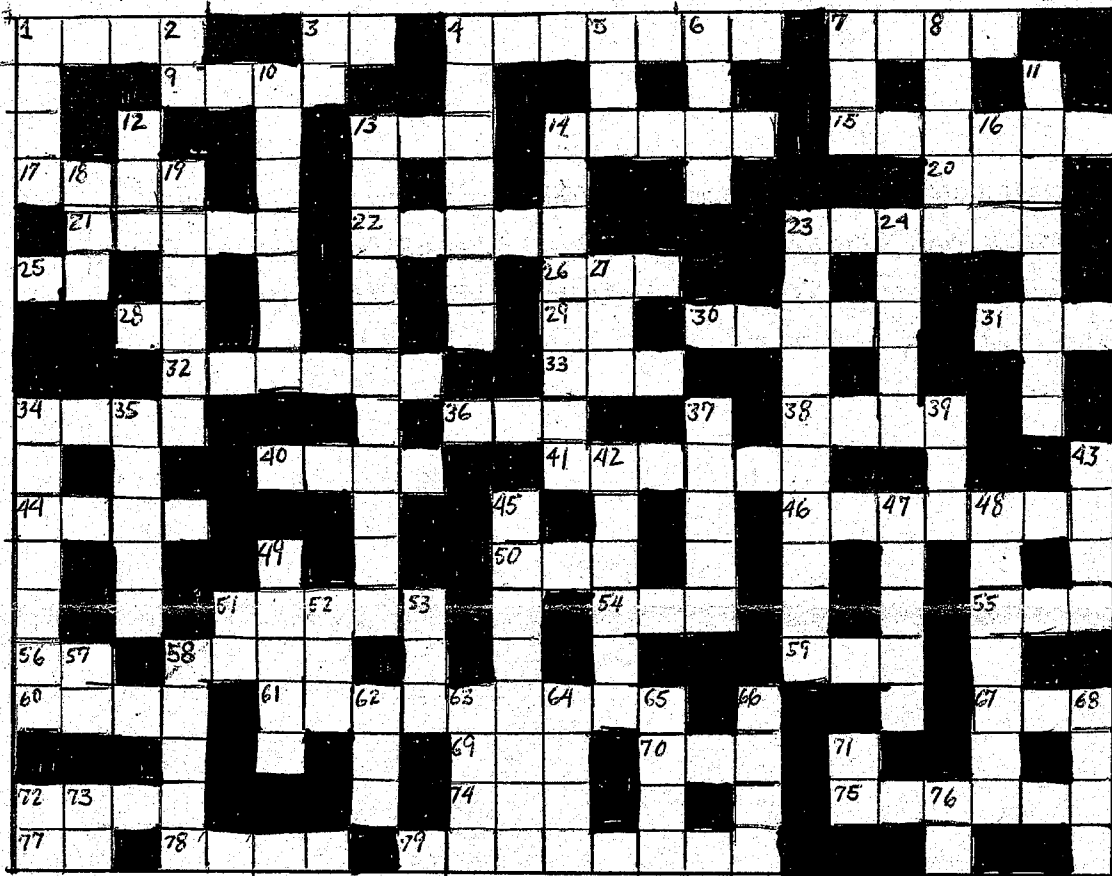
Prudence dictated that Keelan should have retreated, as had the other sentry, but to him, his duty was clear. In the pitch black he fought off the attackers with his now empty pistol and his knife. He didn't know it, but he had been wounded in the head and right arm and his left hand was nearly cut off. But he had done his duty and the bridge-burners had been driven off. Some time after the attack he related that:

he did not stop to count them....there were about fifteen....It was very dark, and I
Could only see dark forms approach me, so I [carried] my left arm up and down to shield my head and face until I heard the crack of a bowie knife...and thrust my knife into him[.]

Four of the attackers were killed and as for James Keelan, he survived his wounds and although his left hand was amputated, he served for a year with the Confederate army. The all-important span survived until 1863 when it was burned by Union troops. For his bravery, Keelan was awarded a small farm where he lived out his life until 1895. A monument was erected over his grave in East Hill Cemetery, Bristol, Virginia.

[Further information came from *Confederate Veteran*, III, 187-189]

On the back page you will find a crossword puzzle, sorry, no answers until the next issue! Enjoy it and remember two clues: Gettysburg and North Carolina! Good Luck.



CROSSWORD CLUES

Across:

- 1-Forty-Niner's metal
- 3-I
- 4-Western foes
- 7-Recognize
- 9-Mrs. Greenhowe
- 13-Sign
- 14-CSA General
- 15-Yet another N.C. Brigade at Gettysburg
- 17-Defender of 69 down
- 20-Tree
- 21-"_____ at Bethel" (See 79 & 79 across)
- 22-Evaluate
- 23-"_____ Sorrell" (Jackson's mount)
- 25-Army rank (abbrev.)
- 26-_____ Market, Va. (1864 battle)
- 28-Atop
- 29-Ouch!
- 30-Civil War bullet
- 31-CSA General Bernard _____
- 32-_____ Harvey Hill
- 33-Union General _____ Wallace
- 34-_____ of Northern Virginia
- 35-Unexploded shell
- 38-Satisfy
- 40-Ambrose Powell _____
- 41-Cavalryman J.E.B. _____
- 42-County in N.C.
- 46-Stephen Dodson _____
- 50-Stroke
- 51-John _____, oldest citizen-soldier at Gettysburg

- 54-_____ the Season!
- 55-Adherent
- 56-Border State, 1860 (abbrev.)
- 58-Depend on
- 59-Lincoln
- 60-Wagon part
- 61-N.C. General, died July 14, 1863
- 67-Santa's helper
- 69-_____ Thurmann, 60's actress
- 70-Army address
- 72-"Lee's Modest Warrior"
- 74-_____ Burns, of P.B.S. fame
- 75-General William Dorsey _____
- 77-Perhaps
- 78-"_____ at Appomattox"
- 79-"_____ at Gettysburg"

Down:

- 1-Aim
- 2-Surgeon (abbrev.)
- 3-Union State (abbrev.)
- 4-N.C. Brigade at Gettysburg
- 5-Anger
- 6-Requirement
- 7-Poltroon
- 8-Belief
- 10-June '63 Cavalry fight (with 19 Down)
- 11-_____ Ridge, Gettysburg
- 12-Va. Mil. Academy
- 13-Union hero of Little Round Top
- 14-Union General killed at Gettysburg

- 16-Ailing
- 18-Behind (naut.)
- 19-See 10 down
- 23-Lee's "War Horse"
- 24-Surprise
- 27-Female sheep
- 34-Southern State
- 35-Dennis Hart _____ (USMA Instructor)
- 37-CSA President
- 39-CSN rank (abbrev.)
- 42-Tell on
- 43-The _____ Brigade (Gibbon's unit)
- 45-_____ 's Spring, at Gettysburg
- 47-Union Commander at Gettysburg
- 48-British C.W. rifle
- 49-_____ Hill, Gettysburg
- 51-Exist
- 52-Type of grass
- 53-Drunkard
- 57-Yoked beast of burden
- 58-Southerner, to W.T. Sherman
- 62-2,000 pounds
- 63-Miss. Battleground, Sept. '62
- 64-Lease
- 65-Civilian casualty at Gettysburg
- 66-Gunmaker Sam
- 69-_____ Fisher, N.C.
- 71-Not down
- 72-Hello
- 73-From
- 76-Wilmington's State