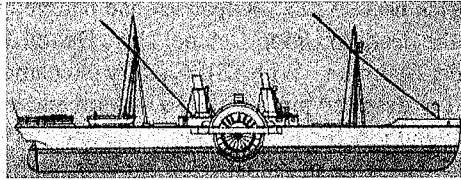


# THE RUNNER



## Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

January 2003 P.O. Box 10535, Wilmington, N.C. 28404 Editor: Bob Cooke

**Our next meeting will be Friday, 17 January at St. Andrew's On-The-Sound  
Social Hour 7 p.m. Meeting, 7:30 p.m.**

### Steering Committee Contact Numbers.

Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle (792-9091) Mike Budziszewski (458-1370) Dan Geddie (799-5338)  
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John Krohn (799-6014) George Slaton (452-7448)

**Our January Speaker will be Mr. Horace Mewborn**, who will share with us his long-standing interest in guerilla (or partisan warfare.) Mr. Mewborn, a native of Kinston, N.C., will talk about the leadership and strategy of John S. Mosby. Mr. Mewborn graduated from Campbell College, spent seven years in the U.S. Army and later returned to college, graduating from East Carolina University. He then began a career with the FBI, retiring in 1997. He has co-authored a work on the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Virginia Cavalry (Mosby's command) for the H.E. Howard Virginia Regimental Series. He has also had several articles published in the Blue and Gray Magazine.

**Please note that our next meeting only will be the THIRD Friday of the month.** William Lamb, age 97, passed away on Saturday, 9 November 2002. He was the GRANDSON (not Great-Grandson) of Colonel William Lamb who commanded at Fort Fisher. The son of Henry Whiting and Rebecca Lamb, he was born in Norfolk in 1905. He authored a book about his grandfather, titled *The Life and Times of Colonel William Lamb, 1835-1909*. By the way, if you're looking for a copy of that work, (the only place it is available is at the Fort Fisher State Historic Site (910-458-55538.)

For Your Information: (the schedule of meetings for the remainder of the season)

17 January	Horace Mewborn	John S. Mosby, "Command and Strategy"
14 February	Jack Thomson	Charleston
March	Spring Trip	Charleston
11 April	TBA	TBA
9 May	Gordon Rhea	Cold Harbor

### The winners of last months raffle were:

Jim Burroughs---Civil War Soldier Research Package; Palmer Royal---*Random Acts of Kindness*; Jim Vaughn---*Confederates in the Attic*; Ed Gibson---*The Confederate Reader*; Jim Burroughs---*Sacrifice at Vicksburg*; Ed Gibson---*This Hallowed Ground*; Ed Hickmon---*Revolutionary War Print*.

"I know he is a damned fool, but Kilpatrick is just the sort of man I want for my Cavalry." So said General William T. Sherman in 1864, of General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick. At our last meeting, **Mr. Samuel J. Martin** brought Kilpatrick back to life. Kilpatrick had bungled his last assignment, a raid on Richmond, which had resulted in the death of Union Colonel Ulric Dahlgren. He opted to redeem his failing reputation in the West, under Sherman. With Kill-Cavalry (so named by his men), there was no middle ground, either one admired or despised him. Called a coward and a lying philanderer by some, others saw only bravery in the man and ignored his mistakes. The one fact everyone is able to agree on is that the man was overly ambitious! Speaking of Kilpatrick's exploits, both on and off the field, perhaps it might have been better to let sleeping dogs lie! **Mr. Martin** gave us wonderful insights into the man, who, at the first sign of the enemy usually yelled "Charge!" with little regard if he was leading his men into a trap. Released from prison in 1863 (for stealing), sending two squadrons to their deaths (twenty men attacked 4,000 Confederates), and having been soundly defeated by JEB Stuart at Buckland, Virginia, he had just led a failed raid on Richmond. After all this (plus his blatant indiscretions with women) he was kept in high command! Even after the war, while serving as Ambassador to Chile, he took up with a loose woman. She later returned to her profession on the streets of Santiago, causing a scandal when it became public knowledge! Mr. Martin's book, (*Kill-Cavalry, The Life of Union General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick*) was offered for sale and copies were autographed by Mr. Martin. We await the publication of his next book, which is on General Braxton Bragg, maybe we can entice Mr. Martin back again to hear about Bragg!

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While perusing the *Wilmington Daily Journal* (17 May, 1864) we found this tidbit about Kilpatrick's Raid on Richmond:

One of Gen. Kilpatrick's sergeants was asked if they released any of the Union prisoners in Richmond.-- "No," he replied, "but we reinforced them."

### Civil War Preservation Trust

In reading almost any magazine or newspaper devoted to the Civil War, there are constant pleas for donations to help preserve the battlefields of the war. In a recent mailing by CWPT, it is said that the following sites are in danger: Allatoona, Ga.; Mansfield, La.; The Wilderness, Va., Gettysburg, Pa. And Harper's Ferry, W. Va. All are threatened by construction of one sort or another. There have been several successes however, the Murphy Farm at Harpers Ferry and three parcels of land at Fort Donelson, Tenn., have been purchased by CWPT. If you are interested in helping preserve any and all sites, please write to them at 11 Public Square, Suite 200, Hagerstown, Md. 21720 (or telephone, 1-800-606-1400.) You may also contact CWPT online at [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org). As they say, "Once we lose a historic treasure...it can never be reclaimed."

What do the gentlemen shown below have in common? Read on!



Adm. David G. Farragut, USN



Capt. R.F. Langdon, CSA  
(photo courtesy Cape Fear Museum)

## A Toast to South Carolina's Secession

In the decade before the Civil War, Commodore David Glasgow Farragut, commander of the newly constructed Naval base (located at Mare Island), California, was concerned about his "right-hand man," Richard Porter Ashe. Ashe, who was appointed Naval Agent for the port of San Francisco by President Franklin Pierce in 1853, was the man who disbursed the monies for the project. In June 1856, Ashe had been arrested along with David S. Terry after a confrontation with San Francisco's Vigilance Committee. Both Ashe and Terry (who was a Justice of the California Supreme Court) were opposed to what they considered the "mob rule" of the Vigilantes. Terry had stabbed a Vigilante and both men (Terry and Ashe) wound up in Fort "Gunnybags," the Vigilante prison. Farragut realized that with Ashe in jail, the construction of the Naval base would come to a halt. While Terry languished in jail, the Navy demanded and secured Ashe's release.

Richard P. Ashe had come a long way from Rocky Point, North Carolina. Born in 1823 (near what is today Ashton Cross Rd. and Hwy. 117) to a well known and respected family, he dropped out of the U.S. Military Academy after dueling with another cadet, but went on to obtain a medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. He afterwards migrated to Texas and it was there he met David Terry; both enlisted in the First Texas Rifles and served in the Mexican-American War. In a later biography, his son wrote that it was in that conflict that both men had saved each other's lives! With the discovery of gold in California, the pair made their way first to San Francisco, later settling in Stockton.

As emigrants streamed to the west coast, the Navy quickly realized the importance of a Navy Yard in the San Francisco area. Hundreds of vessels that made the hazardous trip around Cape Horn were in dire need of repair, but more than that, it was the beginning of the two-ocean Navy. Both the land and its commander had already been selected by Secretary of the Navy James Dobbin, himself a North Carolinian. Mare Island was the site; Commander David G. Farragut would supervise construction and would be the first Commander of the Yard. Born in 1801, he had been adopted by Commodore David Porter (Porter had another son, David Dixon) and had been in the Navy for more than forty years. Married in 1843 to Virginia Loyall (of Norfolk), the couple had one son, Loyall.

Farragut arrived at Mare Island in September 1854 and quickly took charge. With Ashe as Naval Agent, the project got underway, even though funds from Washington were slow in coming. All was not work at Mare Island; there was some time for socialization (although there were not many women in the state.) At the Farraguts for dinner one evening were Ashe and several compatriots from Wilmington. A friendship developed between the two men and at one point, Ashe met Virginia's sister, Caroline. Four years later, the two were married. Probably due to Ashe's influence, Farragut's private secretary was a young Wilmingtonian, Richard F. Langdon (there's the connection!) Surrounded as he was by Southerners, he may have been influenced during this period of sectional strife. Still in California after South Carolina's secession, it was said that Farragut joined in a toast to that state and remarked that, "he would be with South Carolina if Virginia seceded." Virginia did eventually secede, but Farragut stayed with the Union. Upon returning east, he found he could not remain in Norfolk. Due to the unrest in Virginia he moved his family to New York. On the very day (22 April) that State troops seized the Federal Arsenal at Fayetteville, North Carolina, he wrote to his brother-in-law (Ashe) giving his reasons:

I have just seen [Caroline] off in the steamer for California.... We were very near being stopped.... Things were growing worse in Norfolk.... We all packed up in 2 hours & left in the evening steamer for Baltimore. When we arrived In [Baltimore] we found that there had been a fight with the Northern troops passing through to Washington, & they had burned the Rail Road Bridges running north. So we had to come on a cannal [sic] propeller 300 persons crowded together so that we had to lie on the Deck & scarcely room for that, Everything is Excitement from one end of the country to the other[,] everybody appears run mad.

In a letter dated six months after the war had begun, he again wrote to Ashe:

I unfortunately purchased \$1,500.00 of 'City of Norfolk Scrip' all my savings from my cruise, just before this unhappy outbreak. That recalls to my mind your letter; again you say a truce on politics, but you always say just enough to call forth a reply....When I said I knew all about Civil Wars, I only meant the horrors and uncertainty of their elements, not that I could fathom their workings. I have just given you the best evidence that I did not, by purchasing Norfolk City Scrip.

He went on to explain his change of heart:

I never believed that Virginia would secede...& I firmly believe this day, that there is a majority of Union men in that State.... Now I always like to set myself right on the record; you say my letter of the spring before rebellion, was very different,...from those of the present day. I know it. If you have a difficulty with a man, you are apt...to express [yourself] harshly...but when the amend is made, & you are reconciled, you speak differently.

So it was with me. I thought the South was about to be oppressed & should take ground against the North...& if we could not live in peace, we would have to separate...but when I went south...and saw that there was a determination on the part of the Secessionists to break up the Union...then I left them, for I loved the Union under which I was raised.

He had decided to remain under the old flag. Like many Southerners who opted to stay with the Union, he was initially suspect and was not given a command until later that year (December 1861) but quickly proved his loyalty. Best known for his "Damn the torpedoes" remark, in running past Forts Gaines and Morgan at the battle of Mobile Bay, he was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral in July 1862. He continued on duty until he returned to New York in December 1864. His health failing (his eyesight was deteriorating), he was promoted to Vice Admiral in 1866, the rank having been created for him. David Farragut died on August 14, 1870. As for Richard Ashe, he attempted to leave California and join the fight against the Yankees, but was arrested and imprisoned for a year at Angel Island. He was released on condition that he not leave the State, after the war he turned to farming his extensive holdings in the San Joaquin Valley. By 1871, his health began to fail and he died that year.

Judge Terry was able to escape to the South and in 1863, joined the Confederate Army. He returned to California after the war and was shot to death by the bodyguard of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Field (with whom he had a ongoing feud) in August 1889. Several of those at Farragut's dinner table a few years before, would also return and don the gray uniform. His Private Secretary, Richard Langdon, returned to North Carolina, was commissioned as a Quartermaster in the First N.C. Transferred to the Third Regiment, Captain Langdon later served as an artillery officer (Rode's Division.) After the war, he became an auditor with the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad and continued a correspondence with the Farraguts.

[Information on the above came from The Society of California Pioneers; The Huntington Library; U.S. Military Academy; New Hanover County Public Library; Southern Historical Society.]

We are still seeking donations for our raffles, so any Civil War books (or items) you might pick up at a library or yard sale, or if you're looking to clean out a closet would be accepted. Mike Budziszewski reminded us that any historical items (not necessarily Civil War) would be welcome as well!

**We hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!**