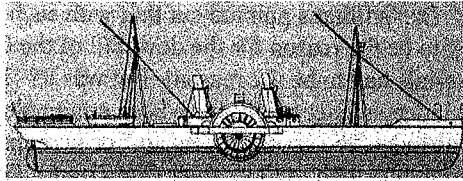


# THE RUNNER



## Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

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

**Our next meeting will be Friday, 9 May 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)  
Bob Cooke (792-1601) Steve Gunter (686-4025) John Moore (256-6328) Tommy King (762-2930)  
John Krohn (799-6014) George Slaton (452-7448)

**Mr. Eric Wittenberg will return** as speaker for our next meeting. He is indeed a student of cavalry operations in the eastern theater of the Civil War. Mr. Wittenberg has added two more books to his credit (*Protecting the Flank: The Battles for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field* and *Little Phil: A Reassessment of the Civil War Generalship of Phillip H. Sheridan.*) In a recent review of another of Mr. Wittenberg's works (*With Sheridan in the Final Campaign Against Lee*, in which he edited the letters of Lt. Col. F.C. Newhall, 6<sup>th</sup> Pa. Cavalry) the *Civil War News* wrote that Mr. Wittenberg, "has edited this memoir with his established competence and accuracy." He has also added another title: he is now a partner in the law firm of Krupman, Golden, Meizlish, Marks and Wittenberg, LLP! Mr. Wittenberg will speak on "Stuart's Ride Before Gettysburg: Who Was to Blame?" That sounds like another book!

### OUR WINNERS:

Wade Hampton Photo- Max Williams; *Distant Thunder*, Dale Lear; *Giants in the Cornfield* (signed by author/member Wilbur Jones!)- Ed Hickmon; *The Blue and the Gray*- Dan Geddie; *Lamson of the Gettysburg*- William Turner; Music of the Confederacy (CD)- Ed Gibson; 2003 Calender- Ed Hickmon.

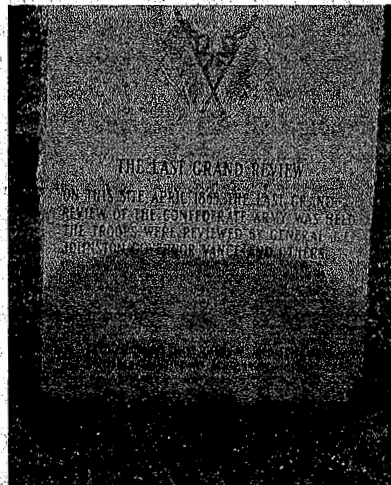
A special thanks to our retiring president, Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle and vice-president, Mike Budziszewski for their untiring efforts on behalf of our RT. They will be sorely missed, as will their wives, Nancy and Karen, who constituted the Refreshment Committee. We have it on good authority however, that the great fudge that we have been enjoying at our meetings might appear from time to time!



Well, with this edition, the RT season comes to a close. We wish everyone a happy and safe summer and we'll see you in September!

Dr. Max Williams intrigued us at our April meeting with his talk on the "Inevitability of Confederate Defeat." Admitting that Southern veterans quickly grasped "the mantle of the 'Lost Cause' as a means of rationalizing defeat," Dr. Williams pointed out that with such valiant soldiers and good leadership, it was believed by many to be the reason for the downfall of the Confederacy. Superior numbers and immensely more materials had to be the reason! But was it? There were times during the war when Confederate victory and independence might have been attainable, indeed at the beginning of the war, the Northern sentiment was to let "the erring sisters go," or perhaps when two Confederate diplomats were forcibly removed from a British mail steamer (the *Trent*.) Great Britain might have gone to war with the United States over that affair. Even when the war began in earnest, the model of the American Revolution, seventy-five years earlier, was well known by the South. Superior numbers didn't defeat those earlier Rebels, so the 4 to 1 difference in manpower, it was felt, could also be nullified; a defensive war would make up for the difference in those numbers. However, when the difference in numbers is greater when slaves and Southern deserters are deducted from the fighting forces. When the 180,000 African-Americans who fought for the North are counted, the disparity in numbers appears even greater.

Examples of "superior industrial societies" that had failed to conquer agrarian ones were many, so the belief that the Confederacy was "destined" to lose the war is a myth. The overriding factors were the "war-weariness" of the Southern people as well as an insufficient amount of Southern Nationalism (a rich man's war and a poor man's fight.) Dr. Williams summed it up succinctly by remarking, "the will to win was greater in the United States than it was in the Confederacy."



Where was the "Last Grand Review" held? (the answer is on page 3)

#### Some Humorous Tidbits!

Said a hungry Confederate to the lady who met him at the door, when out foraging one day, "Madam, will you please give me something to eat? I haven't had a mouthful for three days- today, tomorrow and the next day."

A few days before the battle of Gettysburg one of Gen. Lee's soldiers questioned him as to his plans. "Are you a soldier?" asked the General. "Yes." "Then, sir, be one," said the general, as he walked away.

During the retreat of the Confederates through South Carolina, at the time of Sherman's advance, Sgt. McD\_\_\_\_, of Western North Carolina, was sent on detail to the town of M\_\_\_\_, where a regiment of home guards was stationed. These valorous heroes, seeing a soldier from the front, gathered around him, eagerly inquiring the news. "News?" says Mac, solemnly. "I believe there is none.- Yes, there is a little, too, but it's not of much importance. Old Hardee burned up a regiment of home guards at Florence the other day, to keep them from falling into the enemy's hands." No more questions were asked.

Member Ann Hertzler has generously "loaned" an article to us that was initially published in the newsletter of the Federal Point Historical Society. Although Confederates were more often issued corn bread, hardtack, that much-maligned foodstuff was well known to soldiers on both sides. Read on!

### Hardtack

Ann Hertzler

Hardtack, a ration in the Civil War, was actually known by 1800. Sea bread, ship's biscuit or pilot bread was a dehydrated mixture of flour and water which would stay edible for months. Trappers traded their pelts for supplies such as hardtack. Settlers migrating west lived on hardtack to survive starvation.

Northern and Confederate troops received rations of soft bread or hardtack biscuits, or cornbread or raw cornmeal. When food was limited, soldiers depended on hardtack because it was easier to keep them than soft bread. Food shortages, particularly in the South were caused by naval blockades and by transport shortages of railcars, carts, wagons and horses or mules.

The hardtack recipe (one part water to six parts flour) was mixed, kneaded, rolled (3 1/2" X 2 7/8" and 1/2" thick) scored into cracker shapes and baked for 20 to 25 minutes. The crackers were described as hard as brick and indestructibly unappetizing. A hungry man could eat his daily ration of 9 or 10 biscuits in a short time and still be hungry. Hardtack was eaten as is or in several forms to improve the taste - plain or toasted on a forked stick over the fire with coffee; crumbled in soups for thickening; crumbled in cold water and then fried in the juice or fat of meat; soaked in cold water; fried in pork fat, and salted (called "skillygalee") [we are informed that this was "indigestible enough to satisfy the cravings of the most ambitious dyspeptic," Ed.] It could be boiled in water and bacon grease (called "Hell-fire stew") and made into milk toast with condensed milk (although a can of milk cost .75 cents, quite expensive.)

"Confederate Cush" or "slosh" combined bits of Confederate hardtack or cornmeal mush with garlic [one member of the "Stonewall Brigade" noted that "when we broke it, it looked like it had cobwebs in it, Ed.] To make pudding, hardtack was pounded into a powder, mixed with flour (if available) and water; kneaded into dough, made into a piecrust, filled with apples, wrapped in a cloth and boiled for an hour. Hardtack that fell into the fire and got charred was thought good for weak bowels.

Problems with hardtack were several. It could be so hard it could not be eaten without first breaking "with a strong blow of the fist." Secondly, hardtack became moldy or wet when boxed too soon after baking or when exposed to the weather while sitting at a railway station or other supply base. A third problem was insect infestation during storage with maggots and weevils - slim brown bugs (1/8" long) which completely riddled the hardtack. Coffee with hardtack added to it often had weevils swimming on top. The drowned bugs could be skimmed off easily without leaving a distinctive flavor. Eaten in the dark, one could not tell the difference in hardtack with or without weevils.

Jokes about hardtack included names such as "worm castles," "sheet iron crackers," "tooth dullers," "Lincoln Pies," and "McClellan Pies." [John B. Billings, a member of the 10<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts called it "petrified bread honeycombed with bugs and maggots"] When men who threw their wormy hardtack into the trenches were told to throw it out in order to keep the trenches clean for sanitary reasons, an injured soldier replied, "We've already thrown it out two or three times, sir, but it crawls back."

[Ms. Hertzler consulted the following: *American Heritage Press; Hard Tack and Coffee*, by John B. Billings; *Quantity Feeding During the Civil War*.]

[A final story about hardtack (we couldn't resist it!) One soldier noted that "All the fresh meat we had come in the hard bread and I, preferring my game cooked, used to toast my biscuits." Ed.] The "Last Grand Review" of the Army was held near present-day Selma, N.C.

## CONFEDERATE HISTORY MONTH

May is Confederate History month and the Cape Fear Museum and "Wilmington's Historic community" has put together a series of events and lectures; some are free, while for others there is a charge. Please call ahead to verify dates and fees.

**Saturday, 10 May:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. *Historic Fort Anderson.*  
General guided tours of Fort Anderson and civilian clothing interpretation. Free admission.  
Site: Fort Anderson State Historic Site; contact Brenda Marshburn at 910-371-6613.

**Saturday, 10 May:** 11 a.m. *Southern Exposure*  
Using contemporary photographs, site assistant Ray Flowers (who is also a member of our RT) will re-examine the two battles of Fort Fisher from a decidedly Confederate perspective. Free admission, limited seating.  
Site: Fort Fisher State Historic Site; contact Ray Flowers at 910-458-5538.

**Saturday, 10 May:** 3 p.m. *Confederate Memorial Day Service*  
Cape Fear Chapter No. 3 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy honors Confederate dead. Free admission. Sponsored by the Cape Fear Chapter of the U.D.C. in cooperation with George Davis Camp No. 5, Sons of Confederate Veterans and George Davis Chapter No. 6, Children of the Confederacy.  
Site: Confederate Mound, Oakdale Cemetery, Wilmington.

**Sunday, 18 May:** 3 p.m. *Black Soldiers in Blue*  
Dr. John David Smith lectures about his book, *Black Soldiers in Blue: African-American Troops in the Civil War Era*. Dr. Smith is Graduate Alumni Distinguished Professor of History and Director of the M.A. in Public History program at N.C. State University. Free admission.  
Site: Main Library, 201 Chestnut St., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Contact Dorothy Hodder at 910-772-7858.

**Saturday, 24 May:** 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. *War Between the States Symposium*  
*The Legacy of the War Between the States: Political Turbulence, Imperialism and World Wars.*  
Speakers:  
Dr. Clyde Wilson: Grant to McKinley-Postwar Political Turbulence.  
Timothy Manning, Jr.: McKinley to Wilson-A Growing American Globalism.  
Mike Tuggle: Woodrow Wilson and the New World Order.  
Bernhard Thuersam: The America First Committee and World War II.  
Dr. Tim Wyatt: Southern Democrats and Harry Truman: The 1948 Dixiecrat Revolt.  
Sponsored by the Cape Fear Historical Institute and the Cape Fear Chapter, North Carolina League of the South.  
Site: New Hanover County Regional Library, 1241 Military Cut-Off Rd. Contact Joe Parker at 910-283-3658.

Also on exhibit at the Cape Fear Museum: *What So Proudly We Hailed: Conserving Historic Flags;* through Monday, 26 May 2003. Featuring the "Stainless," the Second National Confederate flag, ca. 1864.

On this date: **6 May 1861-** Confederate president Davis signs a bill declaring a state of war between the nations of the United States and the Confederate States.  
**12 May 1863-** The State of Massachusetts forms the 55<sup>th</sup> Mass. Regiment, a second black regiment, after they receive nearly double the 1,000 volunteers needed for the 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment.  
**25 May 1862-** Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, a devout Christian, fights on a Sunday for one of the few times in his career. The Confederates reward his decision by winning the battle at Winchester, Va.  
**6 June 1865-** President Andrew Jackson continues his leniency toward the former Confederacy by freeing all prisoners of war with few conditions attached to their release.