

CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

September 2002

Newsletter

Editor: Bob Cooke

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Friday September 13 Meeting, St. Andrew's On-The-Sound Episcopal Church
Social Hour 7 p.m., Program 7:30 p.m.

Please note the meeting date as it has changed (see below.)

Our speaker at our May meeting, Eric Wittenberg (an acknowledged expert on the battle) gave us a detailed look at the two-day battle that took place at Trevilian Station (sixty miles west of Richmond) on 11 and 12 June 1864. Noting that it was the largest cavalry fight of the war, it was also the first large battle after the death of Jeb Stuart. Some 9,300 Federals fought 6,300 Confederates in what Mr. Wittenburg described as a "strategic battle." In an attempt to move south, General U.S. Grant used his cavalry as a diversion while he slipped across the James River. While Wade Hampton came to prominence in this engagement, Phillip Sheridan's reputation was damaged. Indeed, as Mr. Wittenburg informed us, Sheridan accomplished none of his objectives. He did not destroy the Virginia Central Railroad nor did he link up with General David Hunter. Grant, however, was successful in crossing the James. One interesting anecdote mentioned the plight of General George A. Custer. He found himself cutoff and surrounded by the enemy. An attempt was made by the federals to break through to him, but it failed. The relief column was led by a Captain Marcus Reno, who in 1876, would again fail to get through to Custer. Mr. Wittenburg autographed copies of his book, *Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station* after his talk.

Our September speaker will be David Norris. Mr. Norris was born in Charlotte, N.C. He graduated from East Carolina University with a BFA in art. After living in Greenville for a long time, he and his wife Carol moved to Wilmington about two years ago. He has written numerous magazine and encyclopedia articles (including articles for *The State*, *American History Illustrated*, *America's Civil War*, *Military Images and N.C. Historical Review*) over the past decade, mainly on Civil War or North Carolina topics. Besides writing, he spends his spare time in his art studio, playing guitar or attempting to maintain a garden! Mr. Norris will speak on Foster's Raid to Goldsboro. His article on the raid appeared in the August issue of *Civil War Times*.

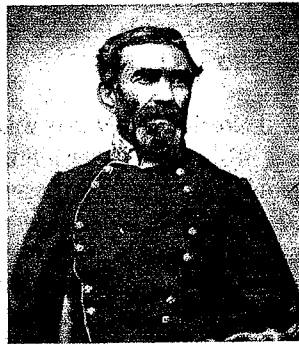
In an effort to accommodate as many members as possible, our meeting date has been changed (again!) to the second Friday of the month. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Included in this month's issue is a membership application form, which might also serve as a gentle reminder that its dues time again. If you haven't paid your dues for the year, you may mail a check or money order (to Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, P.O. Box 10535, Wilmington, N.C. 28405) or pay Dan Geddie at the next meeting. Dues are still twenty-five dollars, still a bargain for the price! Also, its raffle time again. If you have any items (books or prints in particular) suitable for donation, please call Mike Budziszewski (458-1370) or simply bring them to the next meeting!

The following is a **tentative** schedule for the season (please note the **highlighted** dates, we will meet on the **FIRST** Friday in October and the **THIRD** Friday in January 2003, for those months only)

13 September	David Norris	Foster's Raid to Goldsboro
3 October	Will Green	Petersburg
8 November	Paul Anderson	Turner Ashby
13 December	TBA	TBA
17 January	Horace Mewborn	John S. Mosby, "Command and Strategy"
14 February	Jack Thompson	Charleston
March	Spring Trip	Charleston
11 April	TBA	TBA
9 May	Gordon Rhea	Cold Harbor

By 1864 we know what the South felt about **Braxton Bragg's** military prowess. Denigrated throughout the Confederacy, in February of that year he was appointed President Jefferson Davis' military advisor. In July, he was sent to Atlanta to investigate General Joe Johnston's failure to stop Sherman. What was the Northern reaction? The following news excerpt is from the **New York Times**, 22 July 1864.



The Inevitable Bragg

The most encouraging piece of news which has reached us with regard to **SHERMAN'S** position in Georgia, is that Gen. **BRAGG** has gone to Atlanta to exercise a personal supervision over the movements of the rebel army. This only is sufficient to remove all doubts as to the ultimate success of Sherman's operations. There are not many Generals to whom the Union cause is more deeply indebted than to Gen. Bragg, and the assistance which he has rendered it is all the more creditable to him, as his sympathies must of course be altogether on the rebel side. No matter how this war may end, no true Unionist can forget the valuable cooperation which Gen. Rosecrans received from him in Tennessee...and it was...in no small degree to the masterly combinations of the Confederate leader that we got into Chattanooga without firing a shot....Finding our army was in great straits at Chattanooga, he let us have Lookout Valley, and believing that Longstreet's presence on Missionary Ridge was probably embarrassing us, he dispatched that...personage for Knoxville and left himself for Dalton when requested to do so by Gen. Grant.

We consider, therefore, the arrival of such an old and tried friend at Atlanta as a happy omen. We may feel satisfied that...he will, before many days "supervise" the city, if not the garrison, into Gen. Sherman's hands....When Bragg appears in the field, he "means business," not talk. Instead of making propositions, he hands us over States, fortresses, rivers, armies and cities, anything and everything that comes in his way. [Many believe that's the real reason Fort Bragg received its name! Ed.]

A Message From Our President

The Civil War armies stopped fighting more than 137 years ago. The last of the war's veterans died forty-three years ago. For the past eight years, members of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table have been meeting to learn about the war and those who fought it. Now the organization is ready to begin its ninth season of study and fellowship. With it perhaps we will be more enlightened as to why those brave men in blue and gray fought so desperately and reflect on what their sacrifices meant to our nation. The Civil War's battles ended long ago, but in many ways the struggle is not over. We Americans still deal with issues over which the war was fought: liberty, equality and national purpose. At the end of the year, however, I suspect we will again better appreciate what one important American wrote so eloquently during the Civil War, that is, that our great nation is still the best hope for mankind on earth. Welcome back members of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table.



Be sure to bring a little extra money to our first meeting. We have a surprise in store!

How We Spent Our Summer Vacation!

Our summer vacation began early this year. Last May was Confederate History Month here in town. There were several Civil War themed talks hosted by the Library, Fort Fisher, the Cape Fear Museum and the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society. We didn't get out to all of them, but did get to the grand reopening of the exhibits at Fort Fisher. The new laser light show was superb! Of course, it was interesting to once again view the cargo of the wrecked blockade runner *Modern Greece*, but an added attraction was the (temporary) display of General N. Martin Curtis' Medal of Honor and Colonel Charles F. Fisher's sword. We did get there just in time to join John Winecoff, (in costume as Major General Alfred H. Terry) as he led the last tour of the day.

Also at Fort Fisher was researcher Henry Mintz, whose lecture and slide presentation on "Confederates of the Lower Cape Fear" was very well received. More interesting was what he mentioned about his time researching at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. He informed us that one of the mainstays of Civil War research, the *Official Records*, is only the tip of the iceberg! To start, there are 300 reels of surname indexes, and then there are the Confederate Adjutant Inspector General's files, the U.S. Secretary of War files and several other files that only the most die-hard researchers know about. Mr. Mintz even went so far as to indicate which Federal researchers were the most helpful!

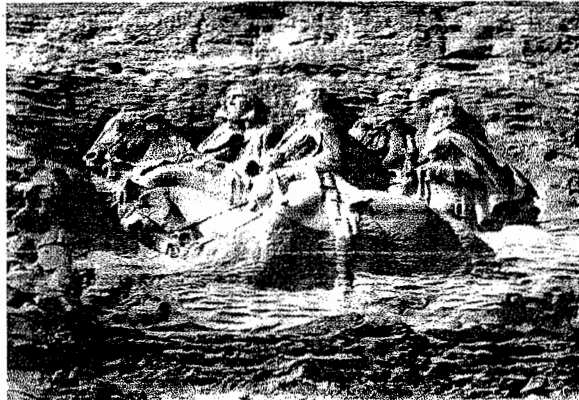
The last lecture attended was that given by noted author William C. Davis. He spoke about the writings of the Civil War. Would it surprise you (as it did us) that the first Civil War book was written in 1808! Titled *Memoirs of the Northern Kingdom*, the book was only sixty pages long, but was a portend of things to come. One of the reasons so much has been written about the war is because, said Mr. Davis, "It's the best story America had!" There were several other meetings held around town, so if you attended one, let us know how it was!

Our real summer vacation began with a trip to Columbus, Georgia. The driving time was just about eight hours, right to "Port Columbus." Our first stop was, naturally enough, to the National Civil War Naval Museum (formerly known as the Confederate Naval Museum.) The museum is home to the remains of the ironclad *C.S.S. Jackson* (or *Muscogee*) and the gunboat *Chattahoochee*. The *Jackson* was

built at Columbus and was launched 22 December 1864, but before it had its armor and guns, it was destroyed (by fire) as the Union troops approached the city in April 1865. There are replicas of Admiral Farragut's flagship, the *U.S.S. Hartford* as well as the *C.S.S. Albemarle* (where we went through the Ironclad Combat Simulator.) We were there in time to view a large model of the *U.S.S. Monitor*, donated to the Museum by Turner Productions. The model was used in the TNT show, "Ironclads," shown a few years ago. As we strolled through the exhibits, we couldn't help but notice the beautiful artwork adorning the walls. A huge mural depicting virtually all of the Confederate States' Naval vessels takes up a portion of the wall, but there are paintings (which are for sale) and a gift shop, which also make the trip worthwhile.

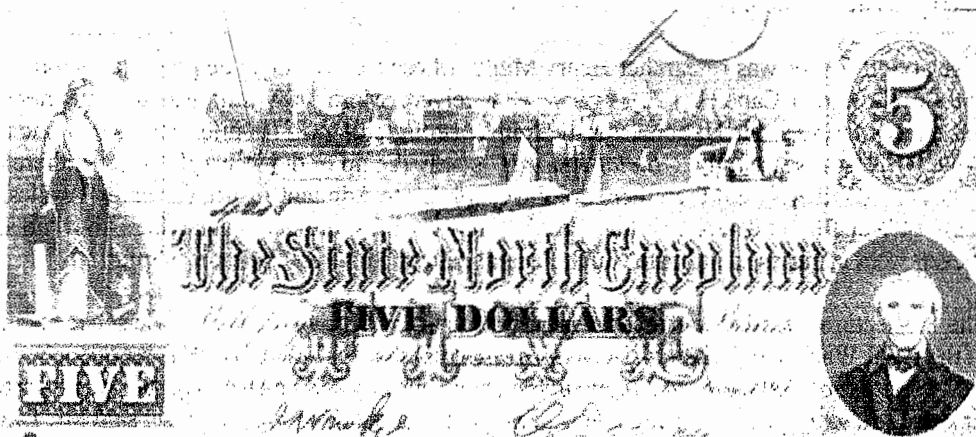


National Civil War Naval Museum, Columbus, Ga.



Stone Mountain, (near Atlanta.)

If you ever go to Columbus, be sure to visit the National Infantry Museum, on the base at Fort Benning. In addition to a fine Civil War collection, there is something for everyone there, from Colonial days to the present. But that's not all! Although we didn't go there, from Columbus it is only about an hour and a half to Andersonville (ten miles north of Americus.) Here you will find the National Prisoner of War Museum, the Andersonville National Cemetery and the prison site itself. While you are in the neighborhood, you might as well visit Plains, home of President Jimmy Carter, another National Historic Site. On our way back we stopped at Atlanta (there is a fine Civil War museum here also) and Stone Mountain (you just have to take the cable car ride to the top!) In all, it was a very (Georgian) Civil War summer!



North Carolina State Issue, 1863. This five-dollar note, printed by J.T. Patterson & Co. is known to collectors as the "Wilmington Waterfront Note." "Flanked by the goddess of liberty and a portrait of N.C. Treasurer Daniel W. Courts," some collectors believe it is simply a generic one, while others believe it shows the actual waterfront. (From *Documenting the American South*, UNC Chapel Hill.)

Be sure to check next month's issue to find out just who John C. Braine was!