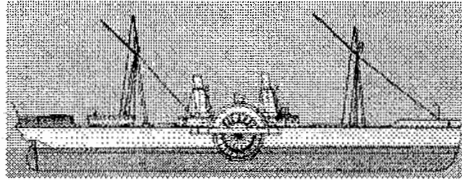


THE RUNNER



Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table
April 2004 P.O. Box 10535, Wilmington, N.C. 28404 Editor: Bob Cooke

**Our next meeting will be Thursday, 15 April at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound
Social Hour 7:00 p.m. Meeting 7:30 p.m.**
(PLEASE NOTE: FOR APRIL ONLY, OUR MEETING WILL BE ON THE THIRD THURSDAY)

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) Ross St. George, Dale Lear (686-2418)
David Norris.

Jack Travis will speak at our April program on E. Porter Alexander. At the present time, no other information is available. Greg Biggs, our scheduled speaker is unavailable.

Please remember that our May meeting (Thursday, the 13th and the cost will be \$25) will be held at the Cape Fear Club. Dress is business casual and our speaker will be Gordon Rhea; there will also be entertainment offered by Lynn O'Connell who will sing us some Civil War melodies.

Raffle Winners: Ed Walsh- Set of Confederate Soldiers; Steve Gunter- *Sacrifice At Gettysburg*; Richard Covell- *Glory in the Name*; Palmer Royal- Confederate Veteran magazines; David Norris- *Sumter is Avenged*; John Wincoff- *Civil War Hostages*; Harry Clements- *Cold Mountain*; Bob Cooke- *The Regular Confederate Army*; Richard Bellows- *Finding Civil War Campsites in Rural Areas*; Thanks to David Norris for returning a winning ticket!

Well, we've gone and done it! We have begun to set up our Round Table's Website. (Visit it at www.mso509.com/runner.html) Webmaster **Al Hines** has taken on this prodigious task and has already done wonders with graphics, links and all those other cyber-hookups! We will be able to post news items that arrive a little too late for the newsletter, date changes, samples of the newsletter (with a possible archiving of past newsletters), also a merchandising page. We are also looking for input from our members with respect to the site; if you have a idea that you think will help to spread the word about our RT, please see Al at the next meeting.

Thanks to **John Moore** for the February refreshments and to **Dan Geddie** for this months repast! We received a very nice thank you note from Ms. Mary Barrett of the U.D.C. for our donation (\$404) for the restoration of the fence around the Confederate Memorial at Oakdale Cemetery.

Riding the Streetcars in Philadelphia- Ninety Years Before Rosa Parks

Last evening a colored man got into a Pine street passenger car, and refused all entreaties to leave the car, where his presence appeared not to be desired. The conductor of the car, fearful of being fined for ejecting him, as was done by the judges of one of our courts in a similar case, ran the car off the track, detached the horses and left the colored man all by himself. [He] still firmly maintained his position in the car, having spent the whole of the night there. The conductor looks upon [his] part...as a splendid piece of strategy. The matter creates quite a sensation...and crowds of sympathizers flock around the colored man.

[*Herald of the Union*, 26 May 1865]

FREDERICKSBURG-CHANCELLORSVILLE

In preparation for our spring trip, Mr. Ross St. George prepped us on the battles of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania (mainly following Lane's Brigade). After detailing the history of the brigade, Mr. Ross led us to Mayre's Heights where 70,000 Confederates faced 120,000 Federals in a front that stretched seven miles in length. This battle he indicated, foreshadowed the gruesome struggles of the First World War. After early Union successes, in which Lane's Brigade was shattered by Yankees that had penetrated a gap in the Confederate lines, the day saw the Southerners deal a severe blow to the bluecoats, as division after division was sent in piecemeal to attack on a narrow front (Mr. George's maps were informative at this point). It was during this winter battle that a heavenly harbinger was offered to the Rebels: a very rare (and "spectacular") aurora borealis appeared in the evening skies. Many saw it as a sign from God that theirs was the just cause. After entering into winter quarters for the remainder of the year, the brigade would go on to fight at Chancellorsville in May 1863. It was here that Lee sent his strong "Right Arm" ("Stonewall" Jackson) in a flanking maneuver that routed the Union Army. As the combatants tried to establish their lines later that evening, a cavalry attack by Union troopers had left the 18th N.C. soldiers quite skittish. When General Jackson approached their skirmish line (from the enemy's direction), Major John D. Barry gave the order to open fire. Even though he would be promoted time and again, eventually attaining the rank of Brigadier General, it was this order, which would haunt young Barry for the remainder of his days (he would die in 1866). As for Lane's Brigade, they would suffer nearly one third in casualties at Chancellorsville, more at Gettysburg, more at the Wilderness, Petersburg and Ream's Station.

Civil War Preservation

For those of us who went on our spring trip to Virginia, the work of the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust was apparent. They have acquired land on all four-area battlefields (Fredericksburg, Wilderness, Chancellorsville, Spotsylvania) and are still actively seeking to preserve significant portions of the various battlefields. Several of the sites have been incorporated and compliment the holdings of the National Park Service. Yet another organization, the Civil War Preservation Trust, has taken on the mission of preserving endangered battlegrounds (including the purchase of 318 acres at Bentonville, N.C.) throughout several states. We visited the Mullins Farm on our tour, part of which saw major fighting on 1 May 1863; that farm is slated for development (or sale for 40 million dollars!) CWPT has this site on its most endangered list; also on their list is the New Bern battlefield, which is in danger from commercial development. In short we have to support such organizations in order to have something to pass on to future generations. Visit the Central Virginia Trust at their Website: www.cvbt.org. **UPDATE**...Member Wayne Carver has sent the following from the CVBT newsletter: CVBT preserves a portion of Jackson's flank attack at Chancellorsville. On May 2, 1863...three miles west of a crossroads called Chancellorsville, Stonewall Jackson launched a daring attack against Federal troops of the Union XI Corps. On February 23, 2004...the CVBT is positioned to save 16.37 acres of this hallowed ground, to preserve it forever. The physical setting is a portion of the Talley Farm ridge, just south of the old Orange Turnpike (State Route 3). The purchase price was \$200,000.

CSS Hunley Update

17 April is here! This of course, is the date of the burial of the *Hunley* crew in Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston. According to *The Civil War News* (April 2004) scientists are now studying the remains of the eight crewmen; their ages and health problems have been discovered. The bones of Lt. George Dixon have been identified. Confederate records at the National Archives are woefully inadequate, but one of the *Hunley* team researchers (Linda Abrams) has had experience in identifying POW/MIA remains and has contacted probable ancestors of the original crew, for DNA comparison. As the News reported, "Although the eight men will be laid to rest after 136 years submerged in the *H.L. Hunley*, the work in uncovering the secrets of their life and death will continue." There will be a series of events taking place before the burial. Monday (12 April) the remains will lie in state aboard the *USS Yorktown* and there will be a memorial service the following evening (13 April). There will also be talks by the team members who are reconstructing the crewmen's facial features and personal histories. The day of the funeral, fifty cannon will fire a salute and the procession is set to start at 10:30 a.m. The burial will most likely be the last Confederate burial of the Civil War.

WHY ARE THESE PEOPLE SMILING?



BECAUSE THEY ARE ON OUR RT's SPRING TRIP!

**A Chicken Couldn't Live on This Field After We Open Fire!
(E. Porter Alexander after viewing Mayre's Heights and his gun positions)**

Our spring trip was highly successful! Nearly two dozen members and guests assembled at the Wingate Inn for a weekend tour of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. A few stalwarts even reported in early so as to reconnoiter the other battlefield sites on the way! (Dan Geddie reported that Pamplin Park was a must-see for Civil War Buffs.) Promptly at eight a.m. we boarded our tour bus along with Ms. Elsa Martinez of the National Park Service. Fredericksburg: Where Lee's army of 78,000 faced 120,000 Union soldiers. Our first stop was at Chatham, which sits on atop Stafford Heights, across the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg. The house was used as Union headquarters as well as a hospital during the battle on 13 December 1862 and there are still at least three Federals known to be buried somewhere on the grounds; the home was visited by Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman and Clara Barton. From there it was on to the scenes of the battle: first to one of three pontoon crossing made by Burnside's troops, a crossing which was long delayed and had terrible consequences for the Northern regiments (it is believed that Captain Augustus Perkins of the 50th N.Y. Engineers was the first man killed in the battle).

Our excellent tour guide informed us that there were 25 N.C. regiments at this battle; only Virginia contributed more (26 regiments). After viewing a film at the Visitor's Center, which gave an overview of the major battles soon to be fought in the years ahead (Chancellorsville, The Wilderness and Spotsylvania) we were soon whisked to the sites that Ross St. George had briefed us about in February. We were surprised while on a tour of old Fredericksburg when we stopped in at the Baptist Church to hear a talk by John Hennessy, Chief Historian for the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park; Mr. Hennessy spoke of civilian life during the war in Fredericksburg. After leaving the Baptist Church we walked through town (observing two solid-shot cannonballs firmly embedded in a column of the Presbyterian Church!) and wound up at the River. From our vantage point we were shown the boyhood home of George Washington ("Ferry Farm") and the site of a pontoon crossing by the Union army. There were still many sites to see, Mayre's Heights, the Sunken Road and Prospect Hill, (where the Union army came closest to victory).

It was the battle in which the "Gallant" John Pelham enhanced his reputation when, with two guns he enfiladed the Union left flank, moving his guns to prevent enemy gunners from finding his range; it was the battle that saw Thomas Meagher's Irish Brigade assault across a canal and open fields before dying before Mayre's Heights. It was the battle that saw 19 year-old Richard Kirkland, the "Angel of Mercy" succor the distressed wounded; he would later be killed at Chickamauga. After this debacle, one Northern officer said, "The slaughter is terrible- the results disastrous. Until we have good generals it is useless to fight battles." We visited the National Cemetery, a 12-acre site located on Mayre's Heights, where more than 15,000 Federal soldiers are interred; over 85 per cent are unknowns.



**Richard R. Kirkland,
2nd S.C. Vols.**



**Cannonballs lodged in the 2nd
column of the Presbyterian Church.**

**The Sunken Road today, in 1862
it was about 2 feet lower.**

After a full day of looking, pondering and asking questions (all of which were answered by our able guide) we took supper at Smythe's Tavern, a Civil War era cottage (built in 1835). After supper, member Bob Cooke gave a short talk on Union cavalryman Dan Underhill, who wrote home about the battle of Fredericksburg and although we did not encounter any of the resident ghosts, we did recognize the Union general hanging upside down in the bar!

In the morning it was time to finish with Fredericksburg and continue on to the next phase of the four major battles which would be fought in this area. Chancellorsville was but a short ride away and on the way the heavily wooded area known as the Wilderness was pointed out to us. General Robert E. Lee followed up his success at Fredericksburg with what many have termed his greatest victory of the Civil War- Chancellorsville. It was also the place where Thomas Jackson was wounded, putting an end to Lee's dependable "right arm." The new commander of the Union army, "Fighting Joe" Hooker attempted to trap Lee in a pincer movement. Leaving 40,000 men in front of Fredericksburg, he slipped off to the west with 90,000 men. After crossing the Rappahannock, "Fighting Joe" (whose name we were told, came not from his military prowess, but rather from the Washington, D.C. barroom fights he squelched as Provost Marshall!) sent his men along the Orange Turnpike where Confederates under General Lafayette McLaws struck them. Hooker immediately pulled back in a tight defensive position with his back to the river. Our bus halted at the spot where Lee and Jackson held their last meeting, which became known as the "cracker-box conference." The stage was set for Stonewall Jackson's famous 12-mile march and attack on Hooker's flank. Union forces, quickly routed, fell back in disorder. The Confederate line, also disorganized, needed to be reformed and later that evening as Jackson rode back from a scout along the Mountain Road, his own men shot him. We were informed that the present-day marker (behind the Visitor's Center) denoting the site of Jackson's wounding is actually in the wrong spot. It should be along the traces of Mountain Road, on the other side of the Center! The battle continued for three more days with Lee driving Hooker back across the Rappahannock. As our tour returned, we passed through hallowed ground that is being developed at a furious pace. Salem Church, the site of major fighting, is still there, but is very close to malls and business establishments. The Church itself is in need of major work to be preserved. Several members discussed the possibility of chapter II-next year on to The Wilderness and Spotsylvania!



**Fredericksburg National
Cemetery**



**Snowball fight 1863
(9,000 men involved!)**



Old Salem Church

USS PETERHOFF AND UNC-W'S CIVIL WAR CANNON

BY David Norris

Quietly sunning itself on a grassy lawn on the campus of UNC-Wilmington lays a very large souvenir of the Civil War- a 30-pounder Parrot rifle. The Parrot rifle was once part of the armament of the *USS Peterhoff*, a captured blockade-runner assigned to the U.S. Navy's North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

The *Peterhoff* was a British-built, iron-hulled sidewheel steamer. She left Falmouth, England on January 27, 1863, bound for Matamoros, Mexico by way of St. Thomas, Danish Virgin Islands. On February 20, the *USS Alabama* halted the *Peterhoff* just off the Danish island of St. John's by firing first a blank cartridge, then a shotted gun fired across her bow. Although the *Peterhoff* was flying the British flag, and was well within Danish waters, they were searched by a Union boarding party. The Federal sailors found nothing wrong and let the ship proceed to St. Thomas.

Also in the harbor at St. Thomas were two U.S. Navy ships, commanded by Acting Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes, who had gained notoriety for his seizure of the British mail steamer *Trent* in December 1861. (Wilkes removed two Confederate diplomats on their way to Europe; the seizure of the *Trent* angered the British so much that there was a chance of war breaking out over the "Trent Affair" before cooler heads defused the situation.) In 1863, Wilkes was no less aggressive in searching out potential blockade breakers. As the *Peterhoff* left St. Thomas on February 25, signals flew between Wilkes and the *USS Vanderbilt* offshore. The *Vanderbilt* ordered the *Peterhoff* to heave to, and another boarding party examined her papers, which stated that the steamer was bound for Matamoros. However, a sailor aboard the *Peterhoff* told the boarding party that they were really headed for Brownsville, Texas (a port just across the Rio Grande from Matamoros.)

The sailor's testimony was taken as proof that the *Peterhoff* was intended to run the blockade into Texas, and the ship was seized and sent to Key West, Florida. The incident angered both Denmark and Great Britain, the latter particularly because the *Peterhoff* was carrying British mail. The *Times* of London believed that the prize court would quickly release the vessel after such "discreditable proceedings", but the court condemned the ship, which was purchased by the Union Navy. Without a change of name, the prize was transferred to the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron to watch the approaches to the Cape Fear River.

At 5 a.m. on March 6 1864, the *USS Monticello* was steaming to Beaufort for coal when they spotted a strange steamer in the dim predawn light. The *Monticello*'s officer of the watch, Acting Ensign Joseph Hadfield, believed that they had seen a blockade-runner and set a course to challenge the potential prize. Unfortunately, the *Monticello* was steaming closer in to shore than they should have been, and they were blundering into the inner line of blockaders watching the approaches to the Cape Fear at New Inlet. Hadfield thought he was closing in on a blockade-runner at anchor, but instead he was dead-set on a collision course with the blockader *Peterhoff*.

At 5:10 p.m., the *Monticello* plowed into the *Peterhoff*, striking her amidships. The *Monticello* was little damaged, but the *Peterhoff* sank in five fathoms of water within half an hour. All of her crew was saved, although they lost practically all of their possessions. One hundred and twenty officers and men were packed onto the *USS Florida* until other billets could be found for them. The *Peterhoff*'s paymaster, Josiah F. Dunham, told the *Florida*'s paymaster and diarist William Frederick Keeler that he had just joined the navy, and thought he'd had "a pretty hard start."

After dusk on the night of March 7, several boats were sent from the blockaders *Mount Vernon* and *Nippon* to destroy as much of the *Peterhoff* as they could, to keep the Confederates from salvaging anything useful. The Union tars found themselves on a dangerous assignment. In the darkness with a "considerable sea rolling over the wreck," they could only work on the forecandle and quarterdeck, and

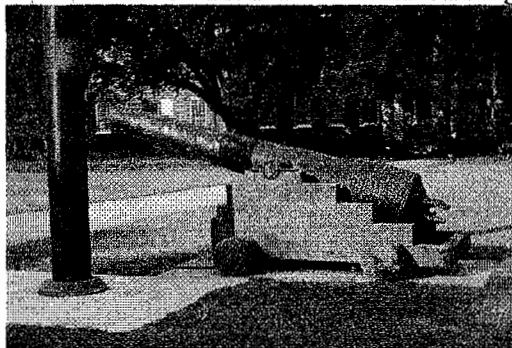
even these were slightly awash even at low tide. They worried about the garrison of Fort Fisher, as there were a considerable amount of signal lights and fires burning busily on the shore all night. The Confederates never fired at the wrecking party. The Yankees cut down the masts and chopped up the rigging. The guns that they could reach, a 30-pounder Parrot rifle on the forecandle and a boat howitzer on the quarterdeck, were spiked and dumped overboard. Just after midnight, the work was done and the boats returned to their ships with some salvaged sails and rigging.

Famed naval raider Lt. William B. Cushing commanded the *Monticello* at the time of the wreck. Inquiries placed the blame squarely on Hadfield's "inefficiency and carelessness," but he was still on board the *Monticello* with Cushing in September. On the night of July 15, 1864, the *USS Cherokee* slammed into the wreck of the *Peterhoff*. The impact awakened most of the crew, but no serious damage was done. After the war, the United States Supreme Court overturned the prize court's decision regarding the *Peterhoff*, on the grounds that the sailor's testimony should not have invalidated the ship's papers, which were in order. After this rare reversal of a prize court ruling, the owners were reimbursed for their loss.

Acting Ensign H.S. Borden of the *Nippon* notified his superiors that the guns on the main deck of the *Peterhoff* "might be taken off, provided there was a suitable vessel for the purpose, if tended to immediately." Borden's advice went unheeded until 1974. In that year, the 4.2-inch, 30-pounder Parrot rifle was raised by a joint effort of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History and UNC-Wilmington. Although on display on the UNC-Wilmington campus, the gun is on loan from the United States Navy, because it is still owned by that agency. The Visitors' Center at Fort Fisher and the Carteret County Museum of History at Morehead City also have guns from the *Peterhoff* on display.

[Sources: Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War*; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*; "The Capture of the *Peterhoff*", *The New York Times*, 15 April 1863.]

[Editor's Note: The *Peterhoff* has yet another Wilmington connection. In 1862, Simon B. Kahnweiler, a German-born Wilmingtonian merchant ran the blockade and traveled to England and Europe to purchase supplies for the Confederacy. In a business partnership with Wilmington's Mayor, O.G. Parsley, Kahnweiler chartered the *Peterhoff* for that vessel's first try at running the blockade. She reached the Islands safely and discharged her cargo and returned to England. She was captured on her second run through the blockade and as a U.S. Navy man-of-war, was equipped with seven guns, was sent to the Cape Fear area where, less than a month later she was accidentally sunk. As for Simon, he remained abroad until after the war; it was later said that he made and lost a fortune during that conflict!]



The gun from the *USS Peterhoff* at UNC-Wilmington.

Lest We Forget

That is the theme for the Fredericksburg Area Civil War Weekend (May 27-31, 2004). There will be presentations, exhibits, encampments, walking and living history tours. The weekend will conclude with a Memorial Day Procession and a "Picnic with the POPS!" In all, it is a continuation of our spring trip! For more information call 1-800-654-4118, or visit their Website at www.fredericksburgvirginia.net