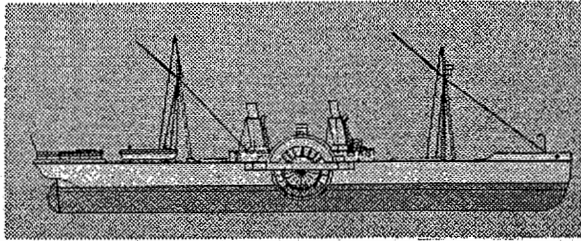


THE RUNNER



Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

December 2004 P.O. Box 10535, Wilmington, N.C. 28404 Editor: Bob Cooke

**Our next meeting will be Thursday 9 December at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound.
Social Hour 7:00 p.m. Meeting 7:30 p.m.**

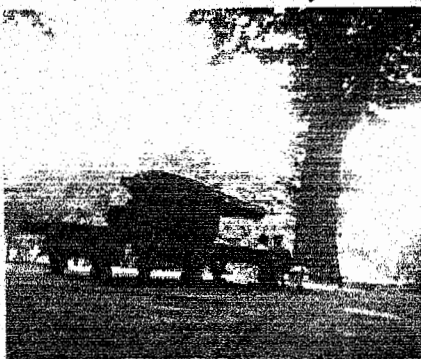
Steering Committee Contact Numbers.

President-Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle-792-9091; Treasurer-Dan Geddie-799-5338; Newsletter-Bob Cooke 792-1601; Sales-Steve Gunter-686-4025; Publicity-John Moore-256-6328; Ross St. George-254-4385; Trips-Dale Lear-686-2418; David Norris. (Correspondence may be directed to the above P.O. Box.)

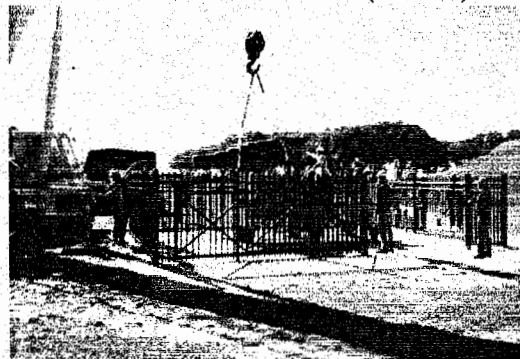
Our December speaker, member Ann Hertzler, is a retired nutrition professional from Virginia Tech. Ann declares that her life has been reinvented as a nutrition historian researching Civil War nutrition, as well as nutrition of the Cape Fear River plantations during the 1700s. The author of "Florence Nightingale's Influence on Civil War Nutrition" in *Nutrition Today*, (July/August 2004) she is also quite active in the Latimer House kitchen and has published their cookbook, *Modern Recipes From Historic Wilmington*. Please join us for a "taste-tour" as well as a talk on the 1860s Ladies Aid Society of Wilmington. See page two of the newsletter for her recipe for a **General Robert E. Lee** cake!

Winners of our Raffle: *Distant Thunder*- Palmer Royal; *Swamp Doctor*- Bob Cooke; *I Rode With Stonewall*- Ed Gibson; *Matt W. Ransom*- Bob Quinn; *Blockade Runner Print*- Mary Royal; *CFCWRT Shirt*- John Winecoff.

Please note we have included a flyer about our spring trip, which will be on **Saturday, 19 March** (not the 18th) 2005, to the Wilderness Battlefield. If you are in the Raleigh area on 15 January 2005, you may want to attend the meeting of the Raleigh RT. **Ed Bearss** will be the special speaker on that date at the NCSU University Club. The cost is \$25 and seating is limited, so if you are interested, please call Bob Farrell at 919-788-0013. **Closer to home**, there will be a special event held At Fort Fisher. The 140th anniversary of the Union capture of Fort Fisher will be held on that Saturday (15 January, 2005) and Sunday. There will be infantry and field artillery demonstrations; siege and heavy artillery demos, as well as talks on women, medicine and African Americans in the war. The reenactment of the Federal assault will take place at 3:30 p.m. While there, be sure to take a look at the Armstrong gun behind the Visitor's Center; inside are the Blakely and Whitworth guns and the Colonel Thomas J. Purdie (uniform) exhibit.



West Point Cadets traditionally proposed marriage beneath the gun.



**The gun comes home...for a while at least.
(November 2004)**

Our speaker last month, Jim "Buddy" McNeil gave us an excellent discourse on most of the Lower Cape Fear pilots that ran the blockade during the war. He noted that the profession was so important that when a pilot was captured, they were not exchanged, but ordered to sit out the war in prison. The job of piloting was usually handed down from father to son and after a long apprenticeship, the son took the helm. The pilots lived at Smithville (Southport), at Carolina Beach and along the Sounds. In 1860 at Smithville there were 24 pilots out of a population of 736. During the war the pilots became quite wealthy and it was said that they were "free-spenders." Commenting on a home built from the profits of the trade, one local woman said that it was built by "fast horses and fast women." His recounting of George Bowen being "decoyed" out to a blockader was especially interesting. Bowen was given the choice of prison or a job as a Union pilot; he took the job! He sometimes maintained a communication with his family by putting a message in a bottle! At least one of these missives was found and delivered to his wife. The bottle eventually washed ashore and the note was found and delivered to her. Later in the war he was able to bring his wife and family to Union lines; not one to dishonor himself, it was said that when other pilots were captured, he "never gave up a fellow pilot." Men like C.C. Morse, Archibald Guthrie, Ephram Gause, John Newland Maffitt, Thomas Grissom, Julius Doshier and many others whose names are intimately associated with those vessels that ran the blockade, hold a special place in the region's history. Indeed, it was after the war that the profession suffered its greatest calamity when, in 1872, five pilots were lost at sea in a storm.

We are extremely proud to announce that our Round Table has once again answered the call to preserve our history. We have donated \$500 to the **Friends of Brunswick Town, Inc.** for their noble effort to purchase the original garrison flag (a Second National) of that post. Remember, if you would like to contribute (a tax-deductible donation) in your own name, contact member Richard Long at 910-253-6973.

The General Robert E. Lee Cake: (Men, don't try this at home!)

(From The American Heritage Cookbook, 1964)

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour.	2 cups sugar
½ teaspoon cream of tartar	grated rind and juice of 1 lemon
1 ½ teaspoon baking powder	dash of salt
8 eggs, separated.	

Grease and flour four 9-inch cake pans. Sift together flour, cream of tartar and baking powder, four times. Beat egg yolks with a rotary or electric beater until very thick, light and creamy. Add the sugar, a few tablespoons at a time, and continue beating until mixture is smooth and pale yellow, (this is a sponge cake, so thorough beating is imperative.) Stir in lemon rind and lemon juice. Beat egg whites and salt until they stand in peaks. Fold into egg-yolk mixture alternately with the flour until well mixed. Spoon into cake pans and bake in a preheated (350 degrees) oven 20 to 25 minutes or until cake begins to pull away from sides of pans. Loosen edges with a knife and turn out on cake rakes to cool while you prepare the filling and frosting.

Lemon Jelly filling	grated rind of 2 lemons
6 egg yolks	juice of 4 lemons
2 cups sugar	½ cup butter

Mix egg yolks with sugar, lemon rind and lemon juice, cook over boiling water, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves. Add butter and continue cooking, stirring constantly for 20 minutes or until filling is smooth and very thick. Cool, then spread between layers of cooled cake.

Lemon-orange frosting	2 tablespoons lemon juice
¼ cup butter	3-4 tablespoons orange juice
6 cups confectioners' sugar	grated rind of 1 lemon
1 egg yolk	grated rind of 2 oranges

Beat or work butter until it has the appearance of thick cream, stir in confectioners' sugar, a little at a time and continue working until mixture is very smooth. Beat in egg yolk and lemon juice. Stir in enough orange juice to make a spreadable frosting, then add grated lemon and orange rinds. Spread on sides and top of cake. [After printing this recipe, we hope the cake is at the meeting!, Ed.]

Fort Fisher...After the Fall.

(Part I)

Early in 1866, the steamer *Chicopee* made its way down the Cape Fear River to the landing at Fort Fisher. The fort, which was now garrisoned by Federal troops, was still littered with the remnants of the battle early in the year. A party of gentlemen got off the boat and examined piles of artillery fragments, exploded cannons and iron, which covered the site; they were there to make a bid on the iron. The preceding summer, "hundreds and hundreds of acres...under negro cultivation [produced] this valuable crop." The U.S. Government held the auction and estimated that there was 1,000 tons (that is two million pounds!) of iron; the metal was sold for \$20.65 per ton; much of the iron was taken, but there was still a lot left. In June 1867, two men were charged with "stealing iron." When spotted by an army sergeant, they replied that they were merely picking up the iron sold to a Mr. Preston at the government sale. The sergeant let them continue about their business, but the following day, he again noticed the two men by Battery Buchanan and peered into a "pontoon boat" the men were loading with shells. When again questioned, one of the men admitted that the boat was loaded with live 10" Blakely shells, the property of the U.S. Government and that they had taken "all the shells at Fort Buchanan." They implicated several others and eventually three more men were arrested "on suspicion of being concerned in the theft of quantities of iron stolen at different times from the beach on Bald Head and Fort Fisher." They were fined \$50 plus costs, or if they opted, three months in prison at hard labor. Perhaps the men had been mistaken by believing that as the garrison was soon to leave the post, anything left was up for grabs! [Note: relic hunting is still illegal at Fort Fisher!] When the fort had been garrisoned, it was used as a quarantine station (which was later reestablished off Southport) and in 1866, when the telegraph line was repaired, a signal station.

The fort had been manned by U.S. troops since it was taken by storm in January 1865. In May 1867, orders were received from Washington that "Forts Hatteras, Fisher and Johnston...are to be abandoned [.]" Later that year at Fisher, another auction was held and several barracks-type buildings were sold. By 1870, the Navassa Guano Company established a fish oil works on Federal Point and began to catch "the peculiar fish...designed for making oil." Although the machinery was in place, the boats and nets had arrived, the fish were not cooperating; the "fat-backs" had simply disappeared! Around this time, the stories of supernatural events began to surface:

About 8 o'clock Thursday night, a ghostly apparition, mounted on a white horse with blood-red spots on him, rode up to the Post-office window and demanded, in sepulchral tones, 'Give me Gen. Whiting's mail for Fort Fisher.' A shot was fired at him without any effect except causing him to vanish. So we are told.

In the mid-1890s, Cliff Thomas went out hunting. As he "waited impatiently for ducks to appear" it grew darker; he finally spotted his quarry and brought down two Mallards. After recovering the game, he realized that it was now quite dark. As he made his way along the river back to camp, the moon cast shadows around him. As the story continued:

Then suddenly, some distance ahead...he saw the figure of a man standing under a large pine....[Continuing towards the man, he soon came] abreast of the silent figure. The moon was just rising over the tree tops and its light fell full upon his features. He had a youngish slender figure but the skin of his face seemed like parchment and his eyeless sockets stared emptily ahead;- a dead man in Confederate uniform.

'My God,' exclaimed Thomas under his breath, 'The Lone Sentinel.' A shiver ran down his spine. He could feel his hair rise [and] panicking with fear, he glanced around. In the distance he saw a flicker of light'

Thomas ran to the light, which proved to be the cabin of a local citizen. When he told the man what he

had seen, the old man nodded in agreement and told Thomas that others had reported seeing a ghost also. It was reported that other "ghostly visitants made their appearance" at the fort also. These visitors were said to have been washed ashore in coffins, which "drifted with unnatural regularity...and as many occupants raised their fleshless bones...and formed themselves into columns...marched with noiseless step." These news reports were scare tactics used by the Ku Klux Klan, which, it was said, met (in 1868) at the fort.

Regardless of ghosts and other apparitions, the area was favored for fishing, bathing and excursions, so visitors continued to come to the site. In 1879 "Moonlight and Music" was the theme of the steamer *Passport*, which, for a quarter, would whisk one on an excursion to the fort. By the early 1880s, a building was erected for the "Federal Point Fishing Club," while the Mayo House soon opened its doors for the steamers that now made regular Sunday trips to the locale. There were bathing, fishing and boating facilities available (as well as the "best liquors and cigars, fish, shrimp, clams and terrapins.") Within ten years, Mr. Mayo was a partner in the Fort Fisher Land and Improvement Company. The land was to be developed, a railway was to be built from Carolina Beach to the fort. A large amount of land around the fort had been purchased, streets and lots were planned. It would not be the last time since 1865 that the fort would be threatened. With the damming of New Inlet (by the construction of "The Rocks" in 1881) erosion became a major problem at Federal Point. Nearly 400 feet of the beachfront was reclaimed by Mother Nature before it halted. Erosion had begun soon after war's end; indeed, Colonel William Lamb noted in the 1870s that the Mound Battery was not as high as it was just a few years earlier.

By the end of the century as international tensions increased, there was talk of rebuilding the fort, but it was decided instead to rearm Fort Caswell on Oak Island. Although the forts were never to see combat again, another battle was brewing. Those who had fought at the fort had begun visiting the site soon after the battle ended. James A. Smith (now a Reverend), a former member of Company D of the 1st Heavy Artillery Battalion, had defended the River Road sally port (Smith was said "to have fired the first shot of the battle at the advancing Union army") and had been wounded and captured at the "Bloody Gate." Upon returning from a visit to the fort in August 1902, he and other Confederate survivors began to seek funds to "erect a suitable memorial" to his comrades. Although the land was now in private hands, the owners agreed to allow a shaft or tablet to be built. The funds, it would appear, never materialized, but Smith and Henry C. McQueen, another survivor and president of the Murchison National Bank in Wilmington, continued to push for recognition. In 1905 the first official reunion of Confederate veterans met at Carolina Beach. One Union veteran, who had lost his leg at the battle, had asked leave to "attend the funeral of a part of himself that was buried at Fisher 42 years ago." On 15 January 1907, Confederate and Union veterans held a joint reunion in Wilmington. At this reunion, the Blue and Gray came together as one; the name of the association was changed to "The Fort Fisher Survivor's Association" and elected President of the Association was the former commander of the fort, Colonel William Lamb. Vice-president was General N. Martin Curtis, the Federal "Hero of Fort Fisher." At the meeting, two Confederates were overheard bantering:

Well, well, well, old friend, how are you? I haven't seen you since the night we spent in the old fort before the surrender...and do you remember what you were singing to yourself that evening?
'Why, no, what was it?' 'Well, you were crooning an absurd little verse that was as follows: 'The Yanks may be strong and they may be bigger; but we'll kill every one, by a pullin' of the trigger.'

It was also at this reunion that James Smith recognized the man who had captured him exactly 42 years earlier. Benjamin F. Seeley, then a member of the 117th N.Y. Regiment, had taken Smith prisoner at the point of his bayonet; the two quickly became fast friends and had a picture taken at the "Bloody Gate" "as they clasped hands in friendship." On a later trip to Washington, Smith presented a copy of the photo to President Theodore Roosevelt, who then showed it proudly as proof that the nation was once again reunited.