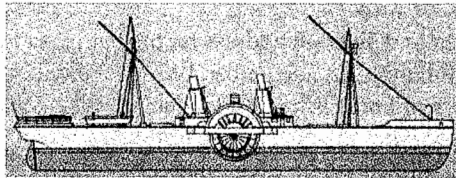


# THE RUNNER



## Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

January 2005 P.O. Box 10535, Wilmington, N.C. 28404 Editor: Bob Cooke

**Our next meeting will be Thursday 13 January 2005 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; Trips-Dale Lear-686-2418; Webmaster Al Hines 799-7284 or via our website at [www.mso509.com/runner/html](http://www.mso509.com/runner/html) David Norris; Ross St. George-254-4385; Correspondence may be directed to the above P.O. Box.

**Our speaker for January, Mr. Paul Branch**, is a native of Carteret County and graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill with a BA in history. In 1981 he became a ranger with the NC Park Service at Fort Macon. As the fort's historian, he gives guided tours, living history presentations, does restorations, museum exhibits and handles all manner of research about the fort. In 1982, he authored *The Siege of Fort Macon*, an in-depth look at the 1862 battle and also *Fort Macon: A History* (1999) which is a general account of the fort's entire history. He is currently working on an as-yet untitled work, a history of German U-boat operations along the east coast during WWII. Mr. Branch's subject will be...Fort Macon!

**Jimmy Bartley, Director at the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Site** gave us a short talk on his efforts to bring the Fort Anderson garrison flag (a Second National-the one with the St. Andrew's Cross in the canton) home. Mr. Bartley is convinced the flag "fell off the wagon for a purpose" and as of this month, over \$18,000 (of the \$40,000 needed) had been raised. We can be quite proud because, as member Richard Long has informed us that between "the group and its members, the Cape fear CWRT has given nearly \$2,000 to the cause." We are nearing the halfway point, so it really looks good that the flag will indeed be placed "in a bombproof" at the fort. **Reserve the weekend of January 15-16 for the reenactment of the Second Battle of Fort Fisher.** Call the fort (910) 458-5538 for more details.

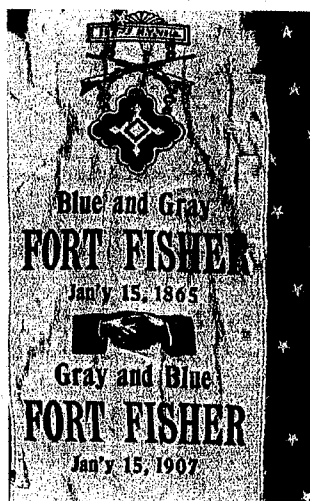
**Knapsacks Discarded.-** Knapsacks have fallen into general disuse and discredit in the Confederate armies and in derision of them soldiers call them "hand organs." Whenever a company or regiment is seen marching with knapsacks slung, the taunt is sure to follow: "I say, you've got your organs, where's your monkeys? You left them behind, expecting to find bigger and better monkeys down here," etc.

Wilmington *Daily Journal* 4 June 1864

**At our December meeting** we were treated to a taste-fest of Civil War era deserts prepared by Ms. Ann Hertzler and friends! Admittedly, we were drawn to the R.E. Lee sponge cake, as we had written about it in the last letter! Following desert, Ms. Hertzler gave a talk on the Wilmington Ladies Aid Society during the war. That group, an outgrowth of the pre-war "Ladies Benevolent Society", fed and cared for the sick and wounded soldiers that passed through the town; benefits were given to also raise funds. "Delicacies and stimulants" (wines, ales, whiskey) seemed to be the items most requested and these ladies "filled a needed gap" to sustain the troops. According to Ms. Hertzler, they also supported the war effort by sewing haversacks, socks, shirts, bedding and virtually every type of clothing the troops found necessary! **Please see the insert for details on our ("Lee to the Rear") spring trip!** The Battle of the Wilderness pitted Lee against Grant for the first time; it is a continuation of our trip last year and promises to be every bit as good as that one was!

**After the Fall**  
(Part II)

In 1908, James Smith went to Utica to deliver an address on the battle, as that city was the home of many of the members of the 117<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Infantry. In September 1909 that city hosted "The Great Reunion" with more than 50 Confederate survivors of Fort Fisher in attendance. When W.H. McLaurin, a Wilmington veteran, was served dinner, he asked what the dish before him was. When told it was Hungarian Goulash, he was still puzzled until he ate it, whereupon he exclaimed it was "beef hash with dumplings! Getting down to business, the Association again called for Congress to act on the Fort Fisher property. One of their first priorities was to push Congress to establish a National Park there.



**The 1907 reunion was held in Wilmington. Veterans were clad in blue and gray.**

**1878 ad for Navassa Guano; The fish works at the fort provided a substitute. Weekly Transcript and Messenger**

Earlier that year, a delegation had assembled in Washington, D.C. and appeared before the House Military Affairs Committee to lobby for the purchase of Fort Fisher, however, it was soon realized that the money (\$40,000) would not be forthcoming. In November Wilmington was honored with a visit from President Howard Taft and it was made sure that one of the sights he saw was Fort Fisher! Along for the ride down to the mouth of the river were H.C. McQueen and Reverend Smith. Unfortunately, there was still to be no National Park on Federal Point. In 1914, Reverend Smith passed away. Although he had accomplished much in bringing public awareness to both the veterans and the fort, he died without seeing his dream fully realized. Earlier that same year, the Kure Land and Development Company commenced work on cottages, streets, a pier, railway and a hotel. Fort Fisher Sea Beach was being readied for the season! By 1917, with sewers, telephone service, wells and electric lighting, over 60 lots had been purchased.

With the passing of Smith, General Curtis and Colonel Lamb, the impetus for a National Park subsided. The legacy of Fort Fisher was carried on by the surviving veterans and their descendants; by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and also Captain Edgar D. Williams. Williams had been a lad during the war and had watched from across the river as the fort was bombarded into submission. In the early 1920s, he was the driving force to have a granite marker placed at the battleground (the dedication was attended by the widow of "Kit" Bland, the man who had twice, under fire, placed a flag near the site); he spoke to school groups and continued the fruitless fight for a national park. By this time, annual memorial services were being held at the wind-swept dunes. A "little wooden shack" had been built to house "Walter's Place," a drink stand and bath house. Nearby was a flagpole (erected due to William's efforts) and it was Walter Winner's job to raise and lower the flag every day! In 1923, in his honor, the "beautiful stretch of boulevard...along the ocean front from Carolina Beach to Fort Fisher, and encircling the mound...has been christened 'Edgar Williams Boulevard.'"



**Captain Williams and his wife Ida; he died in 1928 (N.H. Co. Library).**

## SEASIDE APARTMENTS

ARE NOW READY FOR OCCUPANCY COMPLETELY FURNISHED—LIGHTS  
AND WATER FURNISHED—NEW BUILDING—NEW FURNISHINGS—OCEAN  
FRONT—EVERY ROOM OUTSIDE—SHOWER BATHS

Separate toilet for each apartment, every door and window screened, just a few feet  
from ocean waves that kiss the sands of one of the most beautiful beaches in Amer-  
ica—where bathing is safe and a pleasure—where fishing from a new concrete foun-  
dation pier is wonderfully in fact, this new Apartment House, located at—

### Fort Fisher Sea Beach

OFFER THE MOST ECONOMICAL AND PLEASANT MANNER OF FAMILY  
VACATIONING

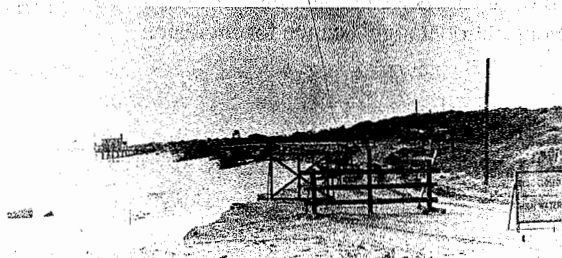
Make Your Reservations Now. Reference Required—Rates Very Reasonable—For  
Particulars Address

## Seaside Apartments, Inc.

R. F. D. 2, Wilmington, N. C., Or Phone 634-R

**1926 Ad for Kure Beach.**

In 1924, 400 acres, which included the fort, was sold for \$20,000 to Thomas Orrell, who represented the firm of Alexander Sprunt & Son. In 1928, a macadamized road was built to Fort Fisher using as a foundation, a nearby coquina rock outcropping. Unfortunately, the coquina was part of the fort's protection against the ravages of nature and in years to come, much of the fort would be reclaimed by the Atlantic Ocean. With erosion, many artifacts were constantly being uncovered. In 1929, a Colt revolver was discovered "with a full charge of five cartridges in its chambers." The finder then "proceeded to clean it and also oil the weapon. This having been accomplished, he pulled the trigger, and much to his amazement, the revolver discharged." It was also noted that the pistol had eight notches carved on the handle! In 1929, the Federal Point Lightkeeper's house site was conveyed to the City of Wilmington. The ground encompassed one acre and was to be used as a memorial site to commemorate the battle. Today known as "Battle Acre," the city was to "improve and maintain" the grounds. Four large cornerstones were placed to mark the acre and a large memorial stone (6' by 8') was placed in the center of the field.



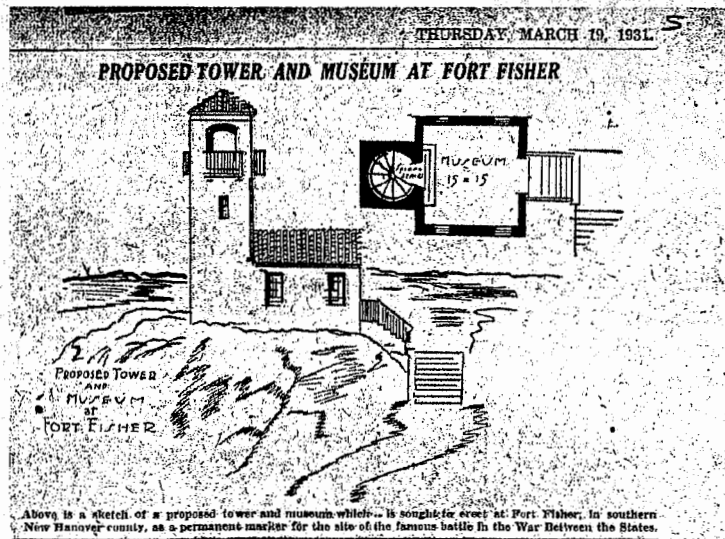
**Erosion washed out the road around the Mound Battery in 1928. Battle Acre appears (center) in the distance.**



**Undated photo of erosion at the Mound. (Fort Fisher Archives)**

Formally dedicated in May 1931, the principal speaker of the day was one of the participants of the battle, Henry C. McQueen. Now a bank president, he recalled how important the fort was to the Confederacy and hoped that the site would become "a sacred spot designed to keep alive the brilliant memory" of the fort. When the bones of an unknown soldier were found at Fort Fisher in 1935, the remains were reburied "near the monument on Battle Acre;" the soldier has since been identified as a Confederate. Attempting to capitalize on the tourist trade, at one point it was proposed to build a tower and county museum, but

this too, fell by the wayside. The UDC had expressed an interest in assisting with the work at Battle Acre and they too, had been given land upon which to erect a marker. Their site was atop the "Mound" the 60 foot-high battery at the southern end of the fort. Charles C. Johnson was selected to erect the monument; he had completed the North Carolina memorial at Gettysburg just a few months before. Shortly after the foundation was laid, the site had to be changed. In 1865, the ocean was 700 feet from the Mound, while in 1931, it lay only 150 feet away. A Federal Examining Board was sent to determine what might be done to prevent its loss. The Board noted that a bulwark would cost in excess of \$71,000 and that the cost was "not justified [in]...the interest of navigation" and still unprotected years later, the famous Mound Battery, buffeted by the wind simply eroded away (the U.S. Army had hastened its destruction by hauling tons of sand away during WWII to build magazines). The UDC "monument to defeated valor" was twice moved away from the encroaching sea (in 1972, the concrete base of the monument could still be seen at low tide.)

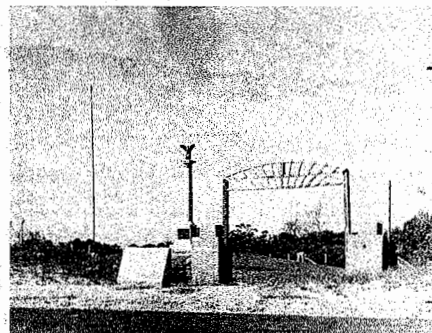


**(1931) Proposed tower at Fort Fisher-It was never built.  
(Wilmington Morning Star, 19 March 1931)**

Throughout the decade of the 1930s, the torch of preservation was carried forward by such men as Louis T. Moore, legislator W.R. Doshier and yet another Reverend, Andrew J. Howell. In 1934 Howell, who had been present at the 1907 reunion, organized and became the first president of, the Fort Fisher Memorial Association. A final effort in 1936 once again failed to have Fort Fisher become part of the National Park system; it was said the site was "not considered of sufficient national significance for inclusion."



**By the late 1930s, a fishing pier had been built which remained until 1954. The old piers can still be seen at low tide near "The Riggings." (Walter Winner, inset).**



**Undated photo of "Battle Acre."**

(Next month, the conclusion-Part III, will take us through WWII to the present day)