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# The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

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## The *RUNNER*

### Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Editor **Bob Cooke**

February 2006

Our next meeting is on Thursday, 9 February - St. Andrew's On-The-Sound

Social Hour 7:00 p.m. Meeting 7:30 p.m.

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Our speaker for February will be Mark Bradley. Mark received his B.A. in History from N.C. State and his M.A. in History from UNC-Chapel Hill. He is currently writing his doctoral dissertation on civil-military relations in North Carolina during Reconstruction. Mark is the author of two books, *Last Stand in the Carolinas: The Battle of Bentonville* and *This Astounding Close: The Road to Bennett Place*. He has written numerous articles for *North and South*, *Blue and Gray* and the *North Carolina Historical Review*, among other publications. Mark lives in Graham, N.C.

The title of Mark's program is "Monroe's Crossroads and Aversboro: A Sneak Preview." As the title indicates, Mark will provide us with an overview of our upcoming tour in March. The Battle of Monroe's Crossroads and Aversboro occurred during William T. Sherman's Carolinas campaign of 1865 and demonstrated that the Confederate army under Joseph E. Johnston was far from defeated. This will be Mark's third appearance before the CFCWRT.

### **Upcoming News!**

As mentioned in our last letter, there will be a reenactment at Forks Road (behind the Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum.) This will take place on Saturday 25 February (10 am until 5 pm) and again on Sunday from 10 am until 3 pm. It will mark the 141st anniversary of the battle and military and civilian reenactors will present living history exhibits which will include small arms and artillery demonstrations, artifact exhibits as well as children's activities. Our own Dr. Chris

**Fonvielle will speak on the battle which opened the road to Wilmington for the Union army. Cameron Art Museum is located at the intersection of S. 17th St. and Independence Blvd. and admission to the event is free. For more information call (910) 395-5999 or online at [www.cameronartmuseum.com](http://www.cameronartmuseum.com)**

**Raffle Winners: Unlikely Allies- Bob Quinn; With My Face to the Enemy- Dale Lear; The Illustrated Confederate Reader- John Moore; Gettysburg- Steve Gunther; A Stillness At Appomattox- Palmer Royal.**

**At our last meeting “Kim” Kimball gave us a blow-by account of the daring raid by that nemesis of the Cape Fear, Union Naval Lieutenant William Barker Cushing. Billed as “the longest unsupported Union raid” of the Civil War, it (and the sinking of the dreaded ram Albemarle) bolstered Cushing’s reputation to the point where by war’s end, he was, together with Admiral David G. Farragut, the most widely known naval figure of the war. After describing the armament as well as the U.S.S. Ellis itself, Mr. Kimball indicated by the fall of 1862, how much the North needed a victory. Cushing, it might be said, was following the guidelines of Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, who ordered that the Navy “descend vigorously” against the Confederacy, burn vessels, seize stores and in general, be aggressive. Selecting the New River as a good avenue for his venture, Cushing (who was only 20 years of age) pushed off into the river on 23 November 1862. As they made their way upriver, they were spotted by Confederate pickets, stationed nearby “to watch for Union incursions.” The alarm went out but it would take time for the Confederates to rally to the endangered point. There was no time to even warn the citizens of Jacksonville, Cushing’s likely target, of the impending attack. By 1 p.m., Cushing had made his way to the city’s wharf and landed a party of tars who immediately “captured twenty-five stand of public arms”, the Wilmington mail and 6 slaves. Also captured were two schooners and after running up the U.S. flag at the courthouse square, they decided it was time to depart! As they slowly made their way down river, they were closely hounded by cavalry; Cushing fired and drove off his pursuers, but he realized they would have to anchor at some point in the river, as the twisting river, with it’s shoals could only be navigated during the day. This delay gave the Confederates time to bring up several pieces of artillery and sight them on the gunboat, now anchored for the night. As dawn approached, the rebels opened with artillery, but were driven off by Cushing’s return fire. When the Ellis grounded, Cushing shifted his men to one of the schooners but, with 6 volunteers, remained aboard his stranded steamer. When the Confederates began peppering his vessel with the deadly accurate 12 pdr. Whitworth gun, Cushing loaded his cannon, set fires on his vessel and set off for the prize schooners. Upon his return to the fleet, he believed he would be reprimanded for having lost his ship, but was instead commended for his actions. As the “Scourge of the Carolina Coast”, his name would be used to scare Confederate children, but this bogeyman was real and would again thwart Southerners when, in October 1864, he sunk the ram Albemarle!**

### **Events, events, events!**

**Fort Anderson: The reenactment of the battle for Fort Anderson will take place on the very dates the actual battle took place 141 years ago: February 18th and 19th (Saturday and Sunday). The battle will take place about 2 p.m. on both days. There will be food sutlers, a bake sale and the raffle of a reproduction of the garrison flag now on display at the site. The (facsimile) flag has been meticulously crafted by Ben Tart (a 19th century fabric and material expert). Our own Dr. Chris Fonvielle will speak on Sunday.**

**The Onslow County Museum will host their 9th Annual Civil War Encampment on April 1st and 2nd (10 A.M. until 5 P.M.). Activities will include Infantry, Artillery, Cavalry and Navy demonstrations; Life on the Home Front; children's activities; a fashion show; period music; special guest speakers and even a community dance! For more information call (910) 324-5008 or visit the museum online at [museum@co.onslow.nc.us](mailto:museum@co.onslow.nc.us) The Museum is located at 301 S. Wilmington St., Richlands, N.C.**

**If you are in the Lynchburg, Va. area, Liberty University, (Lynchburg, Va.) Will sponsor the 10th Annual Civil War Seminar on March 24-25 and the subject is "Blood on the Canvas: The History of Civil War Art." Featured speakers will include well-known Civil War artists Keith Rocco and Bradley Schmehl, sculptor Gary Casteel and photography expert Rob Gibson. Also included in the program are authors Harold Holzer and Hunter Lesser. There will also be a performance "unique to 19th century Victorian audiences." The event will be held in the University's DeMoss Hall and reservations are required to be made by 22 March. Admission to the seminar is \$55 (which includes everything, Friday night banquet and luncheon on Saturday). For other pricing, contact the University at (434) 592-4031 or on line at [gsaxon@liberty.edu/civilwar](mailto:gsaxon@liberty.edu/civilwar).**

### **Cooke's Corner**

**Sometime ago, we ran an article on the execution of John Yates Beall. That research fanned a more detailed look into the Lincoln assassination. As mentioned in the article there was a mysterious visit from "two friends...from Baltimore" Beall was hung. Was one of the visitors John Wilkes Booth? It was later said that Booth and Beall had been college roommates at the University of Virginia (and were such close friends that they were known as "Damon and Pythias") and that Booth had gone to see President Abraham Lincoln to plead for Beall's life. It was further said that Lincoln agreed to commute his death sentence, but when later confronted by Secretaries Stanton and Seward, who opposed it. When Beall was executed, Booth decided to kill Lincoln (and Stanton and Seward also). This version of the assassination was put forth after the war by several people, (usually in the pages of the Confederate Veteran) including Dr. George A. Foote, who was captured at Fort Fisher and confined in a cell at Fort Columbus near Beall. (Interestingly, Major General W.H.C. Whiting, also captured at that battle, lay wounded in his prison cell in the same jail. Beall's scaffold, it was reported, was built outside his cell window.)**

**Anyway, a quick visit online turned up a whole lot of Lincoln Assassination theories:**

- 1. Andrew Johnson was involved with Booth. Approximately 7 hours before shooting the President, Booth dropped by the Washington hotel where Vice-president Johnson was staying. When he learned that Johnson was out, he left a card and wrote on it: "Don't wish to disturb you, are you at home? J. Wilkes Booth." Mary Todd Lincoln always felt Johnson was involved in the death of her husband. She wrote "...that, that miserable inebriate Johnson, had cognizance of my husband's death- Why was that card of Booth's found in his box[?]"**
- 2. Lincoln's Assassination was the result of a Confederate Plot. Coded letters found in Booth's trunk back at the National Hotel tied him to the Confederacy. Supposedly George Atzerodt (a fellow conspirator) made a statement that Booth knew "of a Confederate plot to blow up the White House. After the failed Dahlgren raid (in which C.S. President Jeff Davis was a target)**

**Lincoln, it was felt, was fair game for assassination. Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Secretary of State was said to be the prime mover for an attempt on Lincoln's life. When an explosives expert was captured en route to Washington, Booth had to act.**

**3. Lincoln's Assassination was the result of a conspiracy of powerful international bankers. In this theory, Booth is nothing more than a hired gun. The theory is that Lincoln needed money to finance the war and was offered the capital at very high rates by the Rothschilds of Europe. Rather than accept the harsh terms, Lincoln found other funds to continue the war. It was also said that British bankers opposed Lincoln's protectionist policies.**

**4. The Roman Catholic Church was behind Lincoln's Assassination. In 1886, an ex-priest (Charles Chiniquy) wrote a book which maintained that Jeff Davis had offered \$1,000,000 if someone would "kill the author of the bloodshed." It was written that the Jesuits were involved and "were to select the assassins, train them, and show them a crown of glory in heaven." It turns out that Chiniquy, was at one time defended in a lawsuit against the Church, by none other than Lincoln! Chiniquy's book goes on to recite a long list of reasons why the Vatican wanted Lincoln dead.**

**5. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton was the mastermind behind Lincoln's assassination. Stanton was against Lincoln's mild Reconstruction policies, is the main reason given in a book that was written in 1897. This theory also implicates Lafayette Baker (chief of the National Detective Police) as well as several Congressmen.**

**There are several other theories put forth. Is it any wonder there are so many Kennedy Assassination theories around.**

