



The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

The *RUNNER*

Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Editor **Tim Winstead**

February 2011

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, 17 February 2011 at Madeline Suites on the UNCW Campus. This meeting will be our annual Dinner Meeting and will begin at 7:00 p.m.**



We invite and welcome all people with an interest in our American history to attend a meeting of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table. The speakers for our programs are diverse in their views, interpretations, and presentations.

February Program

History of the Museum of the Confederacy



S. Waite Rawls III, President and CEO of The Museum and White House of the Confederacy, will be the speaker at our February 17 Dinner Meeting. Waite will present the history and the future of the Museum of the Confederacy as it transitions into the 21st century from a one-museum site to a multiple-site system of museums. What will be the place occupied by the Museum of the Confederacy and why will its collection remain relevant in a 21st century United States of America?

Join us on February 17 and learn what Waite thinks of these and other questions.

Rawls, a native of Franklin, Virginia, received a B.A. at Virginia Military Institute and was awarded an M.B.A. and J.D. by the University of Virginia. Rawls assumed his current position on Jan. 5, 2004 following a long career as an executive in the international investment and commercial banking industry. His parallel career in volunteering for historical and civic organizations included engagements as trustee of the Civil War Preservation Trust and the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and member of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors. Among the positions he held in the banking, investment, and money markets fields were: Managing Director, Chemical Bank, New York; Vice Chairman, Continental Bank, Chicago; Executive Vice President, The Chicago Corporation; and Chief Operating Officer of Ferrell Capital Management, Greenwich, Conn.

Raffle Winners

Custer in Photographs – Palmer Royal
Gods and Generals – John Bolger
Civil War Schemes and Plots – Sam Flowers
Battle Cry of Freedom – Mary Palmer
Mr. Gatling's Terrible Marvel – Dale Lear
Grant Comes East – Sam Flowers

Trivia Questions February 2011

- 1 – How large is the collection of the Museum of the Confederacy?
- 2 – The Museum of the Confederacy will construct three new museums: Fort Monroe, Fredericksburg, and Appomattox. Each museum will represent a different period of the war. The first of these museums will open during 2012. Where will this first new museum be located?
- 3 – The war caused many people to leave their homes and face a perceived enemy. As found in research during the death study, what were the ages respectively of the youngest and oldest North Carolinian to die during the conflict?

Member News

Bob Maffitt has become a member of The Clyde River Blockade Runners Camp #2168, Bridge of Allan, Scotland.

Sesquicentennial Commemoration

The 150th anniversary of the secession of South Carolina, the firing on the *Star of the West*, and the Cape Fear Minutemen's seizure of Fort Johnston and Fort Caswell has come and gone.

These events were noted by Ed Bearss during his visit to the Cape Fear region during January. Dan Geddie has reported the occasion of Ed's recent visit to Fort Caswell:

On January 14, Dale Lear and I joined the Brunswick Civil War Round Table for a tour of Fort Caswell. The leader of the tour was the none other than Ed Bearss. We were also accompanied by the Director of Fort Caswell, **Rick Holbrook**. We met in the lobby of the hotel. **Rick** explained how that at the end of World War II the site was still a coastal artillery base. In 1946 the Army decided it no longer needed the base, at this point the Baptist stepped in and purchased the base for \$85,000. The Baptist has been using the site to operating a very successful youth camp every summer. Ed Bearss discussed the construction of Ft. Caswell and the fact that it was a pentagonal brick fort and looked very similar to it more famous Ft. Sumter.

Our next stop was on the parapet of the old fort. What a spectacular sight it was. You could see the land and south wall of the old fort. Most of the north wall had been blown away by the retreating Confederates and the sea wall had been replaced with World War I concrete battery. It had the same look as Ft. Moultrie did last year on our tour. Next we toured the inside of the old fort, including a cavernous area that was the powder room. We also toured the other post Civil War battery, including a huge 10 inch mortar that was designed to take out battleships.

One of Ed's discussions was about the Coastal Artillery branch of the US Army. They were elite troops of the army. They had to understand trigonometry. We should remember all of these veterans who served the country well at Ft Caswell from 1848 to 1945.

Dan Geddie

The Civil War Round Tables

While doing some research on one of my favor subjects (the American Civil War), I found an article written by Stephen Ambrose in *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Summer, 1959), pp. 257-262. Ambrose sought to explain the fascination that Americans held for a conflict fought almost a 100 years earlier. He observed that many citizens had almost forgotten WWI, WWII and Korea but they retained a keen interest in the men and women who participated in the war that almost destroyed this nation.

Ambrose explained:

Heart and soul of America's new fascination with the Civil War are the thousands of intensely dedicated members of the scores of Civil War Round Tables scattered throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. Unlike their predecessors, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the United

Confederate Veterans, and other post-war organizations, the Round Tables have no sectional bias. Their basic function is to give members a chance to refight battles. Condemn erring officials – on both sides – and praise distinguished generals in both *Blur* and *Gray*. In this objective the Round Tables have succeeded admirably.

The Round Tables are another evidence that the quiver has not yet subsided, and that a catastrophe which divided the nation 100 years ago is, today, through the Civil War Round Tables, helping to unite it.

I believe Stephen Ambrose was correct in his assessment. When members of Round Tables can come together and examine the events of 1861 – 1865, I believe a better understanding of this period can be determined. When Round Tables such as Cape Fear, Brunswick County, Raleigh, and Ottumwa (Iowa) share their findings, we are united in our search for the relevance of the Civil War.

Tim

January Meeting

"Bringing in the Dead"



Cold Harbor, Virginia, April 1865

Josh Howard presented the status of the North Carolina Civil War Death Study Project.

Background for the study can be found on www.nccivilwar150.com:

On June 10, 1861, nineteen-year-old Private Henry Lawson Wyatt of Company A, 1st North Carolina Volunteers, was killed in action at the Battle of Big Bethel, Virginia. He has been widely recognized and honored as the first Confederate killed in combat and the first of *over 40,000*

North Carolinians to die in the war. Both claims when properly analyzed are unsupported by the historical record, and highlight problems that complicate North Carolina's understanding of its Civil War participation. An ongoing project at the North Carolina Office of Archives and History, supported by the efforts of the Colonel Leonidas L. Polk Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in Garner, is attempting to rectify such issues. The North Carolina Civil War Death Study, work intended to supplement the *North Carolina Civil War Atlas* currently being prepared by the Office of Archives and History, provides a reanalysis of the available archival evidence, compiling the most definitive, accurate assessment of the number of North Carolina soldiers — both Confederate and Union — who died during the conflict.

NOTE: This website offers a most detailed report of the death study.

Josh discussed some long accepted statistics and how, when, and by whom they were prepared.

The 40,275 deaths attributed to North Carolina troops came from the U.S. Army Provost Marshal, James D. Fry, and his study released in 1866. Fry used incomplete Confederate after action reports as a basis for his numbers. The men employed by Fry to complete the initial death report were required to complete the Provost Marshal report prior to their discharge.

Josh provided the criteria for the study of 116,000 service records available to the death study team. Josh estimated the total number of men who served as 125,000; however, the final total may be nearer to 135,000 – 137,000.

The Death Study: New Analysis and New Interpretations

The Civil War Death Study's mechanics are fairly straightforward. The analysis is three phase: (1) a study of what is within the published rosters as well as the actual compiled service records; (2) a study of contemporary North Carolina newspapers; and (3) a cemetery and gravestone survey. Analysis began with going line by line, soldier by soldier, within each regiment in the published seventeen *Roster* volumes, documenting deaths. Each individual's name and unit is recorded, as well as the year of his death and cause — be it a battle wound, disease, accident, execution, unknown or other. For many individuals, particularly those at the beginning of the war, their death was recorded but not the cause. Most often their death was due to disease, though overworked hospital stewards did not waste time recording what type. Examples in the "other" category include those who were murdered, committed suicide, or suffered calamities such as being bitten by a spider or poisoned by eating a terrapin.

For those units which have not yet been covered in the *Roster* series, namely the Senior Reserves, Home Guard, militia units, white and black Union units from North Carolina, as well as those companies that consisted of North Carolinians but which served in other Confederate states' regiments, analysis consists of going through their Compiled Service Records in the same fashion. Records of North Carolinians serving in the Confederate naval, engineering, and signal personnel, as well as general and staff officers, also will be analyzed along with records of Union volunteer regiments raised from Confederate prisoners-of-war.

Caution must be taken in several areas. For numerous North Carolina regiments and companies, muster rolls end in December 1864. Whether from a lack of paper or intentional destruction, the records simply no longer exist. Therefore, if an individual was present for duty in December 1864 but does not appear on any hospital documentation, casualty list, or is documented with a parole at Appomattox or Greensboro, his service record simply ends. In these instances name searches in the 1870 census or research in family histories can provide final disposition. Numerous men were captured at the end of the war, wounded and in Confederate hospitals, for which no final disposition data is available in Union provost marshal records. For others, that information does exist, so on a case-by-case basis decisions can be made as to whether that individual likely died or not. In other instances errors of spelling and pronunciation have complicated the service record. Prisoners often took assumed names, as did those enlisting for bounties, making the researcher's job that much more difficult.

At times the archival evidence is even contradictory. Men oftentimes were recorded as killed or missing when in reality they were sitting in a Union prison camp. Widow's pension records remain for men who, it was claimed, were killed in the war, when all available evidence suggests the man at the very least survived the conflict. These may be individuals who simply never returned home and were

thought of as dead. In addition, just as we are identifying and crediting those North Carolinians who served in fully organized companies within other states' regiments, we are cautiously addressing those Georgians, South Carolinians, Tennesseans, and Virginians who served in organized companies within North Carolina battalions. While their information is recorded, the project must take into account their loss in a separate fashion than totaling them with our North Carolinians.

Conclusions

The North Carolina Civil War Death Study will never be fully perfect or complete. Record loss has ensured that. Nevertheless, the project attempts to provide the most accurate assessment of North Carolina's loss in the war to date. Not only can this study more accurately determine the number of young men from North Carolina who gave their lives for the Confederate cause, but we can for the first time give credit to those white and black Tar Heels who died wearing Union blue. Furthermore, the information gathered can then be used to produce graphical representations demonstrating how many men from each county or each region died in the war. For once, accurate assessments of how many men fell to disease versus combat and how many were lost by various means during each year of the war can be demonstrated, as can the number of North Carolinians who died in prisoner-of-war camps. Such information is essential to furthering our understanding of the war within the state. Similar endeavors currently are being undertaken to compile a more accurate accounting of the number of North Carolinians who participated in the war, and to study the socioeconomic backgrounds of those soldiers. The findings will be published during the Sesquicentennial as supporting material for a larger map-driven project known as the *North Carolina Civil War Atlas*. As North Carolinians begin our Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the conflict, it is only right and honorable that we more accurately identify those who lost their lives. The time has come to get it right.

Josh reported the current total for deaths of North Carolina troops as 31,076 men; however, the final death count may number between 32,000 – 35,000. This 31,076 number represented 25% of the 1860 white male population (age 15 -50). A comparison to the 2009 estimate of the 15 – 50 white male population yielded a staggering 488,878 dead!

The *North Carolina Civil War Atlas* with its county level maps is scheduled for publication in 2015.

Josh explained why this study was made and why it was deemed important as a part of the Sesquicentennial Commemoration. He further provided an answer to a question many people have probably asked themselves: Why does nearly every county square in the states involved in this war have a memorial to those who gave their all in support of a cause? These memorials were important to the people who erected them because nearly everyone in a community was impacted by the deaths of someone they loved. Whether it had been a grandfather, father, uncle, husband, brother, son, cousin, or friend, these men were honored as a remembrance from their families and friends.

Tim

Comments and Suggestions

Comments and suggestions to make the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table and "The Runner" more relevant to your Civil War experience are welcomed.

Trivia Question Answers February 2011

1 - **How large is the collection of the Museum of the Confederacy?** The MOC collection of artifacts number approximately 20,000 items and 100,000 documents and photographs. Among the 20,000 items are 550 wartime flags, 300 swords, and the ten foot long Confederate Constitution. The MOC, at its current location in Richmond, Virginia, displays roughly 10% of the collection.

2 – **The Museum of the Confederacy will construct three new museums: Fort Monroe, Fredericksburg, and Appomattox. Each museum will represent a different period of the war. The first of these museums will open during 2012. Where will this first new museum be located?** On September 23, 2010, the MOC broke ground on its Appomattox site. Waite Rawls led the proceedings that began the expansion of the MOC beyond its Richmond location.

September, 2010 at Appomattox, Virginia



The addition of museums at Appomattox (2012), Fredericksburg, and Fort Monroe will allow the MOC to display much more of the artifacts of "The Lost Cause."

3 – **The war caused many people to leave their homes and face a perceived enemy. As found in research during the death study, what were the ages respectively of the youngest and oldest North Carolinian to die during the conflict?** Nine years of age and seventy-seven years of age.

