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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 **Tim Winstead**

\*\*\*\*\* September 2011 \*\*\*\*\*

Welcome to the 2011 -2012 Program year of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table. Our next meeting will be Thursday, 8 September 2011 at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound (101 Airlie Road). Social Hour at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:30.



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We invite and welcome all people with an interest in 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.

\*\*\*\*\* September Program \*\*\*\*\*



The Most Good for the Confederacy: **Capt. John Wilkinson, CSN**



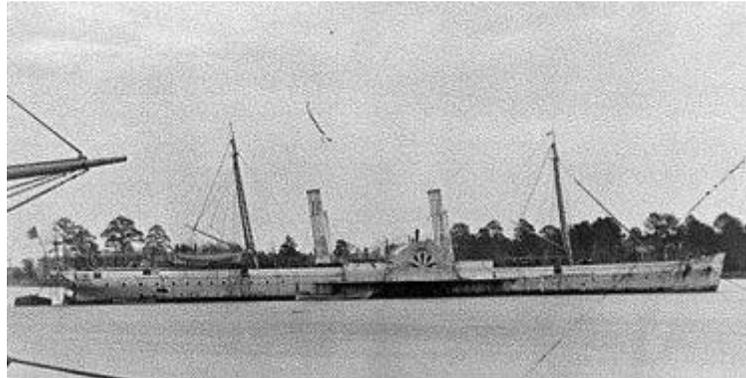
<center>**Wilmington waterfront during the war**

**John Wilkinson 1821 – 1891**

While J.E.B. Stuart and John Singleton Mosby of the Confederate Army will be well known to most students of the American Civil War, a less well known group of heroic Confederate naval officers, who with limited resources, will show every bit as much bravery, energy, dash and imagination in their valiant fight against the overwhelming strength of the U.S. Navy. The September presentation will introduce these naval officers, but the presentation will focus on the career of Captain John Wilkinson.



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***C.S.S. Robert E. Lee***

Wilkinson was among the foremost blockade runners of the Civil War but he also engaged in commerce raiding, construction of ironclads, covert operations in Canada, and purchasing of ships and supplies in England. During a period of nine months in 1863 with his ship the C.S.S. *Robert E. Lee*,

Wilkinson ran the Wilmington blockade 21 times. He was the only naval officer to command every type of vessel operated by the Confederacy.

**Donald Wilkinson**, great-great nephew of John Wilkinson, will speak about the Captain's wartime career and on the Confederate government's overall naval strategy. Captain Wilkinson's ties with the port of Wilmington, other Confederate naval officers, and blockade running will be an appropriate subject to begin our 2011 – 2012 program year. Join us on September 8<sup>th</sup> for a presentation that will add much to our knowledge of naval operations during the Civil War.



**Donald Wilkinson**

**Donald M. Wilkinson**, a Virginian, lives in New York City. He is Chairman of Wilkinson O'Grady, Inc., a global asset management firm, he founded in 1972. Growing up in the Capital of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia, and in the shadows of the great monuments to Lee, Jackson, Davis and Stuart, Mr. Wilkinson developed a shared interest in the Confederate Navy with his Civil War kinsman. He is a 1961 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and a 1966 M.B.A. graduate of the University of Virginia. In his spare time, he is a naval historian and presently is working on a biography of John Wilkinson.

Editor

**\*\*\*\*\* Trivia Questions September 2011 \*\*\*\*\***

- 1 - In July 1864, John Taylor Wood and G.W. Custis Lee were given command of a daring expedition to free and arm thousands of Confederate prisoners held at Point Lookout, Maryland. Lee was to command the land forces who would be dispatched from Jubal Early's army that had begun to move north on July 5. Wood was sent to Wilmington to ready crews and two steamers capable of capturing Union gunboats at Point Lookout. Wood was also to secure weapons to arm the prisoners who would join Early's attack on Washington. On July 9, the Honorable John Tyler wrote to Confederate General Sterling Price in Arkansas and outlined the complete details of the secret expedition. Tyler, son of the late U.S. president, exclaimed that this was "decidedly the most brilliant idea of the war." The expedition failed because of a complete lack of secrecy. It seemed that in addition to John Tyler and Sterling Price, most everyone in the Confederacy and the Union was aware of the daring plan. Had the plan been "decidedly the most brilliant idea of the war," or did it show another scenario as the war had progressed into late 1864?**
- 2 – The Confederates developed a system of lights and signals to help blockade runners gain access to the Cape Fear River. Who reorganized this system while on shore duty at Wilmington?**
- 3 – Who was the first Union general killed in combat during the Civil War?**
- 4 – Who was the youngest general during the Civil War?**
- 5 – Who was the famous journalist who served in both the Confederate Army and Union Navy during the war? This Welsh-born journalist would gain fame as an adventurer and explorer.**

**\*\*\*\*\* Member News \*\*\*\*\***

If you have member news that you think would be of interest to CFCWRT membership, let me know about it.

**1 – Charlie Watson, 1937 – 2011** – Charlie will be missed as a fateful member of the CFCWRT. His contributions to various historical groups around the Cape Fear region were his passion.

**2 – Bruce Patterson** visited the USMC Museum at Quantico and reported that the new exhibit on the **Civil War** was worth the visit. The Civil War exhibit included a segment about Fort Fisher and the role the Federate Marines played in the amphibious assault on Fort Fisher. Bruce also reported that other new exhibits included the **Origins of The Corps** and **Small Wars and Expeditions**.

**3 – Dale Lear** was present for the **St. Albans Heritage Weekend**, July 29-31. Civil War re-enactment units included: 2<sup>nd</sup> Vermont Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Vermont Cavalry, Medical Corps, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mississippi, 61<sup>st</sup> Georgia, and 27 Virginia and 55<sup>th</sup> Virginia Middlesex Artillery.

St. Albans, Vermont was the scene of an October 19, 1864 Confederate raid that claimed possession of the city and the deposits of its banks. The twenty-one Confederate raiders, led by Lieutenant Bennett Young, escaped into Canada with \$200,000. Fourteen of the raiders were captured by Canadian authorities but neutrality laws prevented any from being extradited to the United States.

If you are interested in further information about the raid and the diplomatic maneuvering that accompanied it: [http://asoac.org/bulletins/90\\_hamilton\\_raid.pdf](http://asoac.org/bulletins/90_hamilton_raid.pdf)

**4 – William Carshaw** provided a source of genealogical research information maintained by the **Genealogy Society of Bergen County** (NJ). Their website provided access to their databases as well as links to others resource links. <http://njgsbc.org/>

**5 – Joe George** shared a website that may be of interest to some of our members. The site was developed as a source of information on Virginia's veterans and has links to many national cemeteries and museums. <http://vets2search.com/>

\*\*\*\*\* **Great Civil War Quotes** \*\*\*\*\*

U.S. Grant became one of the great military leaders of the Civil War because he learned from the experiences gained through many hard fought battles. Prior to his narrow victory at Shiloh, Grant had "believed that the Confederacy was a house of cards that would soon collapse." His victories at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson had reinforced his view of the weakness of the Confederacy; he confidently moved his forces south to push his advantage. On April 6 – 7, 1862, Grant absorbed a lesson: the Confederate forces displayed morale and a fighting spirit that he had not previously encountered. Grant adapted from the lesson learned at Shiloh.

Up to the battle of Shiloh I, as well as thousands of other citizens, believed that the rebellion against the Government would collapse suddenly and soon, if a decisive victory could be gained over any of its armies. Donelson and Henry were such victories. An army of more than 21,000 men was captured or destroyed. Bowling Green, Columbus and Hickman, Kentucky, fell in consequence, and Clarksville and Nashville, Tennessee, the last two with an immense amount of stores, also fell into our hands. The Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, from their mouths to the heads of navigation, were secured. But when Confederate armies were collected which not only attempted to hold a line farther south, from Memphis to Chattanooga, Knoxville and on to the Atlantic, but assumed the offensive and made a gallant effort to regain what had been lost, then indeed, **I gave up all idea of saving the Union except by complete conquest.**

The concept of “Total War” would become Grant’s method to end the Civil War. Beginning in 1864, Grant would find Union generals who were willing to carry out the dictates to wage war on the infrastructure of the Confederate war effort.

Source: Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1885), pp. 368-69.

\*\*\*\*\* **Civil War Facts** \*\*\*\*\*

**“The Civil War: Freedom and 49 Other Ways It Changed American Life”**

**Political and social impact:** [No other conflict has so profoundly changed our society:](#)

1. 13th Amendment: slavery banned
2. 14th: citizenship for all born in the U.S.
3. 15th: voting rights for all male citizens regardless of race
4. Women's rights gain momentum
5. 1862 Homestead Act passed
6. Censorship of battlefield photos
7. Reconstruction laws passed
8. Ku Klux Klan organized
9. [Jim Crow laws](#) passed
10. Federal law trumps states' rights

**Medical advances:** In many ways the Civil War set the stage for modern medicine, providing thousands of poorly schooled physicians with a vast training ground:

11. Modern hospital organization
12. Embalming techniques
13. Safer surgical techniques
14. Improved anesthesia
15. Organized ambulance and nurses' corps

**Cultural legacy**

The war influenced our holidays and play:

16. Juneteenth holiday, also known as Emancipation Day
17. [Memorial Day](#)
18. Thomas Nast popularizes image of Santa Claus
19. Some 65,000 books on the conflict
20. Films such as *Gone With the Wind*, *Glory* and *Cold Mountain*
21. More than 70 National Park Service Civil War sites
22. Centennial toys: Civil War trading cards and blue & gray toy soldiers

**A high-tech nation:** The war years brought technological advances:

23. 15,000 miles of new telegraph lines, which reached the West Coast
24. Mass production of canned food
25. Battlefield photography
26. Transcontinental Railroad

**Everyday things:** Wartime helped devise or popularize parts of our daily lives:

27. Can openers
28. Home-delivered mail

29. Left and right shoes shaped differently
30. Standard premade clothing in sizes small, medium and large
31. National paper currency

**Military advances:** In what's considered the first modern war, both sides developed equipment and tactics that would be refined in later conflicts:

32. Minié ball bullets, cartridge ammunition
33. Repeating rifles
34. First machine guns
35. Submarines
36. Hot-air balloons
37. Soldier ID tags
38. Land mines
39. Ironclad ships
40. Trench warfare

**Veterans legacy:** In its wake, the war left a system to care for and honor those who fought:

41. First national cemeteries
42. Network of soldiers' homes later becomes the Veterans Administration
43. Social care for veterans' widows and orphans

**Language:** Last but not least, Civil War slang is still with us today:

44. Carpetbagger
45. Deadline
46. Horse sense
47. Shebang
48. Skedaddle
49. Smart like a fox
50. Greenback

Source: Towner, Betsy, "The Civil War: Freedom and 49 Other Ways Its Changed American Life." *AARP Bulletin*, June 1, 2011.

Bob Cooke

\*\*\*\*\* **Sesquicentennial Commemoration** \*\*\*\*\*

**William C. Davis**, noted Civil War historian and prolific writer, selected the following books as his personal favorites. If the Sesquicentennial Commemoration has inspired your interest, these were Davis's list of great books:

***Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*** – by Ulysses S. Grant, edited by E.B. Long. Grant's memoirs are considered as being among the best soldier's story ever written.

***This Hallowed Ground*** – by Bruce Catton. Although this is a chronicle of the war to preserve the Union from the Northern point of view, Catton told the story of the men from both sides who endured the horrors of war.

***Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*** – by Douglas Southall Freeman. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia are highlighted in the pages of Freeman's masterpiece.

***Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers*** – by Joseph T. Glatthaar. This book provided an in-depth study of the emergence of black soldiers and their relationship with their white officers.

***Flight to Oblivion*** - by A.J. Hanna. The collapse of the Confederate Government and its flight from Richmond during the closing days of the war is retold in Hanna's word portrait of the main characters.

Bruce Patterson

\*\*\*\*\* **Summer Reading** \*\*\*\*\*

I followed my own recommendation for a summer of reading and research. An advanced copy of Amanda Foreman's new book, ***A World on Fire: An Epic History of Two Nations Divided***, arrived in the CFCWRT mail box during May. The heft of a thousand page book was a little daunting; however, I decided that if they were kind enough to send an advance copy, I should at least expend the effort to read this book.



**Amanda Foreman – *A World on Fire***

The letter that accompanied the book stated, “*A World on Fire* narrates the Civil War as a history-in-the-round: it includes the story of the Americans who fought the Civil War in England – from US Ambassador Charles Francis Adams to Confederate Naval Officer James Dunwoody Bulloch – as well as the British, whose support was divided between the Union and the Confederacy all the way from the men and women who pledged themselves as volunteers on the ground in the US to the men who represented Britain in Parliament.” If anything the preceding description fell short in describing the events portrayed in Foreman's book.

Amanda Foreman skillfully and painstakingly interwove the lives and actions of almost two hundred characters from the beginning to the end of the war. These characters, men and women, were diplomats, commissioners, agents, military figures, Pro-Southern supporters, Pro-Northern supporters, journalists, observers, and volunteers. These characters, the great and the not so great, pursued their beliefs with action and energy. The intrigue that involved these men and women was played out on a giant chessboard. Each move and countermove added to the mounting tension that accompanied this period.

When I finally finished ***A World on Fire***, I was saddened to leave my newly found acquaintances. Mary Sophia Hill, Benjamin Moran, Henry Morton Stanley, Jacob Thompson, Henry Feilden, Frank Vizetelly, Francis Dawson, John Fitzroy De Courcy, Sir Percy Wyndham, and many others had given me a much different perspective than I had previously known.

Amanda Foreman spent more than ten years researching and writing this book. She has written a book that provided fascinating reading and much new knowledge about the struggles to gain or deny British recognition of the Confederacy. The battle of wits in England to sway the British government's foreign policy waged from 1861 until the very end in 1865. The British volunteers, Union or Confederate, cast their lot and fortunes with commitment to their chosen cause.

Do not be put off by the sheer size of this work. *A World of Fire* is a story woven so well that it will maintain your interest from the Napier Ball at Willard's Hotel in Washington, D.C. on February 17, 1859 until the *Alabama* tribunal in 1872. British writer William Michael Rosetti wrote in 1866 that the entirety of Great Britain had been divided over the American Civil War. Foreman sought to tell the story of this Anglo-American world about which Rosetti had referred in 1866. She did quite well in her effort.

Editor

\*\*\*\*\* **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. Send them to me at [tpwinstead@gmail.com](mailto:tpwinstead@gmail.com). Please include "CFCWRT News" in your Subject line.

\*\*\*\*\* **Trivia Question Answers September 2011** \*\*\*\*\*

**1 - In July 1864, John Taylor Wood and G.W. Custis Lee were given command of a daring expedition to free and arm thousands of Confederate prisoners held at Point Lookout, Maryland. Lee was to command the land forces who would be dispatched from Jubal Early's army that had begun to move north on July 5. Wood was sent to Wilmington to ready crews and two steamers capable of capturing Union gunboats at Point Lookout. Wood was also to secure weapons to arm the prisoners who would join Early's attack on Washington. On July 9, the Honorable John Tyler wrote to Confederate General Sterling Price in Arkansas and outlined the complete details of the secret expedition. Tyler, son of the late U.S. president, exclaimed that this was "decidedly the most brilliant idea of the war."**

The expedition failed because of a complete lack of secrecy. It seemed that in addition to John Tyler and Sterling Price, most everyone in the Confederacy and the Union was aware of the "daring plan." Had the plan been "decidedly the most brilliant idea of the war," or did it show another scenario as the war had progressed into late 1864? After the war, Captain **John Wilkinson**, of the Confederate Navy, offered a different opinion of the Point Lookout and other such expeditions. "These futile projects for the release of prisoners, serve to show the desperate straits to which the Confederacy was reduced, for want of soldiers." Wilkinson had some previous insight into plans to secure the release of Confederate prisoners for he had commanded a failed 1863 attempt to secure the freedom for those imprisoned on Johnson's Island at Sandusky, Ohio.

Sources: Winstead, Tim, "John Taylor Wood: Man of Action, Man of Honor." *Recall*, Spring 2010. ORN, Series I, Volume 2, pages 822 -828.

**2 – The Confederates developed a system of lights and signals to help blockade runners gain access to the Cape Fear River. Who reorganized this system while on shore duty at Wilmington? John Wilkinson.** As you will hear on 8 September, Wilkinson was a very resourceful officer who was adept at improving not only the communications system but in coming up with ingenious methods to secure more speed from blockade runners under his command. Wilkinson **never** lost a ship under his command.

Source: Carr, Dawson. *Gray Phantoms of the Cape Fear: Running the Civil War Blockade*. Winston-Salem, North Carolina: John F. Blair, 1998.

**3 - Who was the first Union general killed in combat during the Civil War?** On August 10, 1861 at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Union Brigadier General **Nathaniel Lyon** (1818 – 1861) met his death while rallying his troops against Confederate forces near Springfield, Missouri. Lyon defied his aides' plea to remove himself from danger; he shouted to his Kansas and Iowa troops, "Come on, my brave boys, I will lead you! Forward!" and with that said, he advanced into Confederate fire.

Lyon's actions at Wilson's Creek blunted the Confederate efforts to bring Missouri under Confederate control.

Source: Patrick, Jeff, "Missouri's Bloody Hill: Civil War Erupts at Wilson's Creek." *Hallowed Ground*, Summer 2011.

**4 - Who was the youngest general during the Civil War?** Was it Galasha Pennypacker (184(?) – 1916) of Fort Fisher fame? Or was it George Armstrong Custer (1839 – 1876) of Little Big Horn infamy? According to William Marvel in his August 2011 *Civil War Times* article, "The Boy General," **Charles Cleveland Dodge** of the 1<sup>st</sup> New York Mounted Rifles claimed that title. Dodge's commission as brigadier general dated from November 29, 1862.



**Dodge 1841 - 1910**

Dodge retained this distinction for a short period. His superior officer, Maj. Gen. John Peck, had little use for a 21 year old cavalry commander at Suffolk, Virginia. The departmental commander, John Dix, must have shared the same feeling. From the Official Records, Series I, Volume 16, page 561:

FORT MONROE, March 17, 1863

Major-General PECK:

I do not intend that General Dodge shall command the cavalry force at Suffolk. I shall make some other arrangement if he is put on duty in my command.

JOHN A. DIX

Major-General

The young Yale graduate, son of a New York Congressman, resigned his commission effective June 12, 1863. A star whose flame burned so bright could not sustain his brilliance. Dodge; however, rose from the ashes and became a businessman who was a partner in the Phelps Dodge Company.

**5 – Who was the famous journalist who served in both the Confederate Army and Union Navy during the war? This Welsh-born journalist would gain fame as an adventurer and explorer.** John Rowlands was born in Denbigh, Wales in 1841. He immigrated to New Orleans in 1859 and became associated with wealthy businessman, Henry Hope Stanley. Rowlands soon affected a southern accent and assumed a new name – **Henry Morton Stanley**.

Stanley fought with the Confederate Army at Shiloh where he was captured. He quickly deserted to the Union Navy. The Union cause must have also been a disappointment to Stanley for he soon deserted from this position.

As a correspondent for the *New York Herald*, Stanley traveled to Zanzibar in March 1871 and led a 7,000 mile expedition to find Scottish missionary, David Livington. On November 10, 1871, Stanley was said to have uttered the famous phrase of discovery, “**Doctor Livingstone, I presume?**”

Source: Foreman, Amanda, *A World on Fire*; <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/stanley.htm>