

## The *RUNNER*

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

Editor **Tim Winstead**

\*\*\*\*\* **March 2013** \*\*\*\*\*

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, 14 March** at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound (101 Airlie Road). Social Hour begins at 7:00 p.m., meeting at 7:30.

Please join us as we continue our Program Year with our third meeting of 2013. Visitors are always welcome – *bring a friend*. Each of our speakers strives to enlighten, entertain, and add to our knowledge of Civil War history. This serves our purpose of encouraging education and research into that historic conflict

\*\*\*\*\* **March Program** \*\*\*\*\*

#### *The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad In the Civil War*

The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad was the backbone of what became the “Lifeline of the Confederacy.” The importance of the port of Wilmington, the blockade runners, and the extensive defensive forts in this area would have been significantly reduced had the railroad line from Wilmington to Weldon not existed. The story of this railroad and its operation during the Civil War was a tale of the men and events that greatly influenced the course of that war. The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad may have been neither as glamorous as the blockade runners nor as glorious as the battles for the forts; the story of the W&WRR may have been even more important than either in the supply of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

**Dr. James C. Burke** will share details about the ultimate test that the Civil War and its aftermath presented to the men who maintained an operating railroad during a difficult period. His presentation will include discussions of deterioration of railroad equipment; complications of Confederate government policies; sabotage attempts; a yellow fever epidemic; Union raids; the fall of Wilmington; and the unnecessary destruction of railroad property by the retreating Confederate troops. In spite of the challenges, Burke will relate how the W&WRR survived to become a powerful regional economic force.



James C. Burke grew up in Wilmington where he developed an interest in historical clues that can be embedded in an area's geography. He has published scholarly works in "The North Carolina Geographer" and "Railroad History." His books included *The Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road Company, 1833-1854* and *The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad in the Civil War*. His education included: University of North Carolina at Wilmington, BA in Music - 1982; University of North Carolina at Wilmington, MA in Liberal Studies - 2001; University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Historic Preservation - 2004; University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Ph.D. in Geography – 2008.

Editor

**\*\*\*\*\* Fort Anderson February 17, 2013 \*\*\*\*\***

On a cold and windy Sunday afternoon, re-enactors, volunteers, period sutlers, and staff welcomed a hardy group to demonstrations that commemorated the 148<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of Fort Anderson. Artillery, infantry, and navy re-enactors gave visitors a feel for the Civil War soldier and his routine at Fort Anderson during the final winter of the war.

**Jim McKee**, Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Historic Interpreter, and other artillery re-enactors began a demonstration of the routine that a gun crew would have performed to service a 6 pound smooth bore cannon during a battle. The gunners efficiently went about their drill and provided the audience with a BOOM that gave good accompaniment to the event.



**\*\*\*\*\* Raffle Winners \*\*\*\*\***

**Raffle Master: Ed Gibson**  
**Special Assistant Raffle Master: John Winecoff**

If you have books, prints, or other items that you would like to donate to the CFCWRT raffle, see Ed Gibson at our next meetings.

**February Meeting:**

<i>A Rising Thunder</i>	- John Moore
<i>Cold Mountain</i>	- Linda Lashley
<i>Grant</i>	- Anonymous
<i>Lamson of the Gettysburg</i>	- Bill Jayne
<i>Stonewall in the Valley</i>	-Bill Jayne

*The Sands of Pride  
Grant*

- Thomas E. Taylor  
- Terry McGiverin

\*\*\*\*\* **Trivia Question for March** \*\*\*\*\*

- 1 – William S. Ashe was the president of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad when the Civil War began in 1861. What happened to Ashe on the night of September 12, 1862?
- 2 – The W&WRR began operation in May 1840 with 160½ miles of track from Wilmington to Weldon in Halifax County. What distinction did the railroad hold when it began operation?
- 3- During the Civil War, the W&WRR was a 160½ mile railroad that was subject to attack from Union occupied eastern North Carolina. Who was responsible for repairing any damages inflicted by Union raiding parties?
- 4- Who were the Heroes of America and what part did they play in North Carolina during the Civil War?
- 5 – What rolls did the *North Carolina Standard* and *Fayetteville Observer* play during the Civil War.

\*\*\*\*\* **Member News & Activities** \*\*\*\*\*

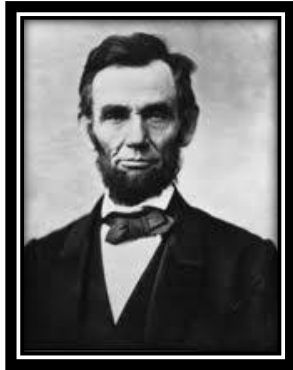
If you have member news that you think would be of interest to CFCWRT membership, let me know about it.

- 1 – Welcome to new members of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table: **Doug Grove, Chris Grove, and Carla Ann Yeager.**
- 2 – **Happy Saint Patrick’s Day!** Patrick Cleburne, Thomas Meagher and many others gave their efforts to the cause they supported during the Civil War.
- 3 – **Bentonville Battlefield – March 16 & 17 Anniversary Program:** Saturday 10 am – 4 pm, Sunday 10 am – 4 pm  
The 148th Anniversary of the largest battle fought in North Carolina will focus on the power of the Confederate artillery. Visitors will get a chance to see how a battery of cannons operated and worked together to deliver their powerful destruction. In addition to artillery and infantry demonstrations throughout the weekend, interpreters will be on hand to discuss life in the Civil War. The Union Monument will also be dedicated during the program.
- 4 – **Cape Fear Revolutionary War Round Table** meeting on March 20, St. John’s Episcopal Church , 219 Forest Hills Drive, 7:00PM. Contact Linda Lashley for details.
- 5 – North Carolina Military Historical Society Symposium, May 11, 2013, 0930 – 1500 Hours, Museum of History, Raleigh, NC. **North Carolina and the War of 1812.** Contact Bruce Patterson for additional details or <http://www.ncmhs.net/>.

\*\*\*\*\* **March 1863** \*\*\*\*\*

By March 1863 the American Civil War had been going for nearly two years and the South was experiencing major economic problems as a result of the North's blockade of its ports. However, the North was not without its own problems as Lincoln had to sign into law what was effectively a call-up of all able-bodied men between 20 and 45 - a move that was not a popular one among the North's male population.

March 1<sup>st</sup>: Lincoln met with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to discuss future military appointments.



March 2<sup>nd</sup>: Congress approved the President's list of promotions but also dismissed 33 officers for a variety of offences.

March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Both Senate and House passed The Enrollment Act. All able-bodied men between 20 and 45 were to serve for three years. The act was unpopular with the public because of its compulsion. Congress must have sensed this as in 1863 only 21,000 men were conscripted and by the end of the war conscription only accounted for a total of 6% of the North's army. Congress also suspended habeas corpus on this day – much to the anger of the Democrats in Congress.

March 6<sup>th</sup>: One of Hooker's attempts to develop the Army of the Potomac was to ensure that it had the most modern weapons available. By this day, his men were starting to be equipped with the Sharp's breech-loading carbine. This rifle gave Hooker's army unrivalled firepower at close range.

March 10<sup>th</sup>: Such was the problem of desertion across all armies of the Union, that Lincoln pronounced an amnesty on this day for all those who were absent without leave. Any deserter who returned to duty before April 1<sup>st</sup> would not be punished.

March 13<sup>th</sup>: 62 women workers were killed in an explosion in a munitions factory near Richmond. The Confederacy was to become more and more reliant on female workers as the war progressed.

March 24<sup>th</sup>: The last Union attempt to take Vicksburg failed. The Mississippi River was very high for this time of the year and it made navigation very difficult. Grant wanted to use the many waterways that surrounded Vicksburg to his advantage – but his plan failed.

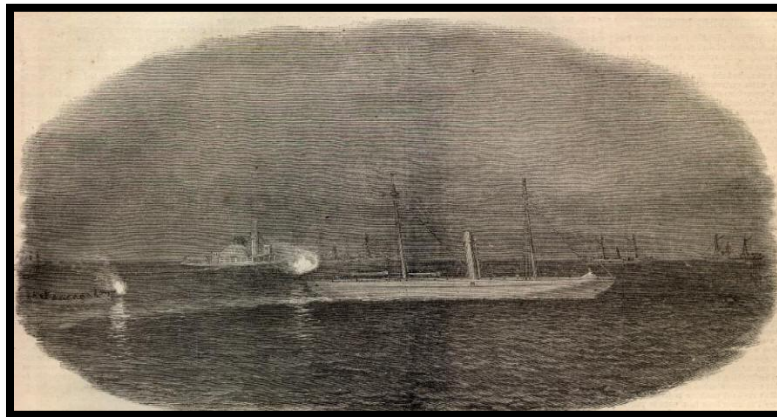
March 26<sup>th</sup>: West Virginia voted to emancipate its slaves.

March 30<sup>th</sup>: Lincoln announced that April 30<sup>th</sup> would be a day of prayer and fasting throughout the Union.

Source: <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/march-1863-civil-war.htm> (accessed February 14, 2013).

\*\*\*\*\* **March 1863 cont'd** \*\*\*\*\*

In the February issue of *The Runner*, Acting Master Richard Hustace of the U.S.S. *Monticello* reported on his unsuccessful attempt to stop a blockade runner that sped past his position at 3:30 a.m. on the morning of February 25, 1863. Hustace's report reflected his frustration at the appearance of the phantom ship and its ability to use surprise and darkness to thwart his efforts. His report was found in the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, Series 1, Volume 8, pg. 573.



The ship that slipped past Hustace was the **Granite City**. She was an 160' X 23' X 9'2", 400 burden ton, iron hulled sidewheeler that was launched as the *City of Dundee* in Dumbarton, Scotland in 1862. Bought and converted to a blockade runner by Alexander Collie and Company, the *Granite City* had made the voyage to Wilmington from Nassau. The *Granite City* cleared the port of Wilmington on the return trip to Nassau on March 12, 1863.

The U.S.S. *Tioga* intercepted and captured the blockade runner off Eleuthera Island, Bahamas, on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The ill fated ship was purchased

by the U.S. Navy from the New York Prize Court for \$55,000. Commissioned as the U.S.S. *Granite City* on April 16th, she joined the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron during August 1863. She took part in a Sabine Pass expedition; the blockade of the Texas coast - where she captured three ships; and the naval bombardment Pas Cavallo and Smith Landing, Texas. On a rescue mission to Calcasieu Pass, Louisiana on April 28, 1864, the U.S.S. *Granite City* was trapped in narrow waters and captured by Confederate troops.

The ship was sold to Thomas W. House of Galveston for \$36,000 Confederate. Converted

to her former use, the blockade runner *Granite City* was run ashore by the U.S.S. *Penquin* while trying to clear Calcasieu Pass, Louisiana on January 30, 1865. This versatile ship - the

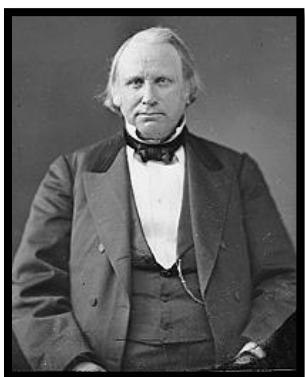
former British ship *City of Dundee*, the former war ship U.S.S. *Granite City*, and blockade runner *Granite City* - broke apart off Velasco, Texas.

**Source:** <http://www.navsourc.org/archives/09/86/86287.htm> (accessed February 17, 2013); Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), p. 234, 242, 271, 303.

**Editor**

\*\*\*\*\* **Official Records** \*\*\*\*\*

Have you ever wondered who was responsible for *The War of Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (ORA)? Or *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (NOR)? Last issue, I provided some information about the Official Records that was a little short of the total information available about that massive undertaking.



**Senator Henry Wilson** of Massachusetts was Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs during the Civil War. In 1864, Wilson drafted a bill that proposed that military reports and correspondence be collected and published as a record of the war. The collection began almost immediately after Lee's surrender when Henry Halleck had Confederate records brought to Washington and combined with War Department records. A staff continued to collect and process documents for the next decade; however, Congress had not appropriated funds to publish the growing number of documents.

On March 4, 1873, Henry Wilson became vice president in Grant's second administration. Wilson used the influence of his office to encourage the project that he had proposed over a dozen years before. Forty-seven volumes were set in type by the end of 1877. By 1901, the U.S. Government Printing Office had published 130 volumes complete with a 1,248 page index accompanied by an official atlas. It was thought, at the time, that the 140,000 pages contained all known information available about the war.

U.S. Navy officials had complained for a decade that the undertaking had ignored huge amounts of naval reports. On July 31, 1894, Congress approved the publication of *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. The first NOR was published by the end of 1894 and the last volume in 1917.

Henry Wilson, who died in November 1875, should best be remembered for the ORA.

Needless to say, the Official Records are a cornucopia of information. They are not; however, the end-all for a search of Civil War reports. Dr. Wayne K. Durrill, Professor in History Department at the University of Cincinnati reminded me that the OR contained mostly senior

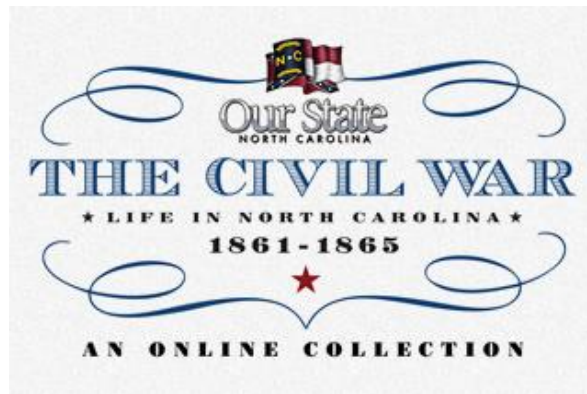
officer reports. The National Archives, in its RG 393 Continental Commands, stored the ground level reports from captains and lieutenants. **ROAD TRIP!**

**Source:** Webb Garrison, *The Amazing Civil War: A Fascinating Collection of Little-Known Facts of the Four Year Conflict that Changed America* (New York; MJF Books, 1998) p. 32-39.; Wayne K. Durrill, e-mail to author, May 1, 2012.

**Editor**

**\*\*\*\*\* February Program \*\*\*\*\***

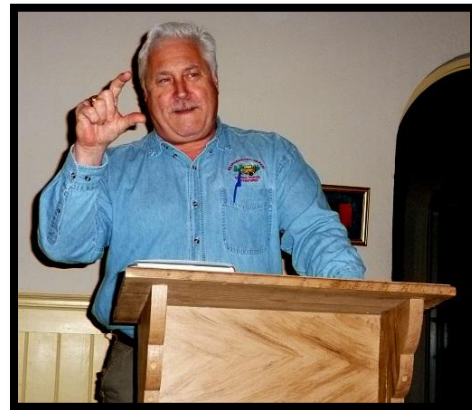
## **The Adventure of Discovery, or Why We Don't Know What We Think We Know About the Civil War**



Source: <http://www.ourstate.com/civil-war/> (accessed January 18, 2013).

**Phillip Gerard** provided a most interesting look at the articles he had written for the *Our State* magazine. Unlike many Civil War historians who examined the generals, the political leaders, and the battles; Gerard examined a large number of North Carolina's men and women who lived during this war. These were people who endured unimaginable hardships and stresses. Their experiences molded them into either survivors or casualties – living or dead. Gerard used primary source letters and diaries to feel and to relate the thoughts of those who encountered the hardships on the battlefields, in the camps, on the farms, and in the towns. "When This Cruel War Is Over" was more than a song to those

who experienced those years; those experiences were what Gerard sought to share as he wrote their stories.



The Civil War began long before the guns fired at Fort Sumter. The two divergent economies and societies that developed in the North and South made conflict a likelihood beginning in the early 1830s. While North Carolina was an agrarian society, it was unlike many states in the lower South. Many of its small farmers and working-class whites favored continuation of the Union. The rush to arms carried many reluctant Tar Heels to the defense of their state. After the

initial 1861 blush of succession, many had second thoughts about the war and where it was leading the people of North Carolina.

Phillip also shared with us what he had thus far learned from his extensive research: Firstly, all that we may have learned about the war was not always as it has been presented. War brought out the best and the worst of man: All of war was not glorious, all slaves and poor whites were not unintelligent, all men were not brave and honorable, all men did not experience war in the same manner. Secondly, knowing events for certain was not always possible. Conjecture was always a part of the letters and diaries, the writers did not know the ending of their stories.

Gerard related how one of the most beneficial occurrences about having written these articles was the feedback he had received from readers. Some pointed out some potential errors and others provided additional details which reinforced the story. Phillip said that eventually all stories would be combined into a single volume, one that contained updated details learned since their first publication.

The *Our State* articles were written in the present tense. Gerard wrote about men and women such as peace advocate William H. Holden, Governor Zeb Vance, Julian Leinbach 26<sup>th</sup> NC Regiment bandsman, Dr. John D. Bellamy and slavery in North Carolina, Confederate officer William Henry Speer, Abraham Galloway - a Cape Fear slave's quest for freedom, Union POW Benjamin F. Booth, farm wife Nancy Leigh Pierson Bennett and her day in history, Wilmington Doctor Thomas Fanning Wood, George Pickett and the Kinston hangings, William Holland Thomas and the Cherokees. Their stories have been written and many others will be written before the end of the sesquicentennial.

Who was Gerard's favorite character? Of the many hundreds he had met through his research, Julian Leinbach of the 26<sup>th</sup> NC Regimental band (second from the left) was his favorite. Leinbach's diary was informative about just what Leinbach thought of the war and his life. See "Battle of the Bands" in the January 2012 issue ([www.ourstate.com/archives/](http://www.ourstate.com/archives/)) to learn more about Leinbach and why he may have held such a fascination for Phillip.



**\*\*\*\*\* Trivia Question for March \*\*\*\*\***

**1 – William S. Ashe was the president of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad when the Civil War began in 1861. What happened to Ashe on the night of September 12, 1862?** On Friday, September 12, 1862, Ashe was heading in the direction of his home, 19 miles north of Wilmington. He hoped to reach the turnout at North East before the southbound mail train passed. At 7:30 P.M., within a quarter miles of the turnout, his handcar made contact with the mail train. The others on the handcar escaped, but Ashe was mutilated. The locomotive,



recently purchased from the Seaboard & Roanoke RR, had been put in front of the mail train because of mechanical problems. Neither the locomotive nor the handcar had a light.

**Source:** James C. Burke, *The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad in the Civil War* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013), p. 98.

**2 – The W&WRR began operation in May 1840 with 160½ miles of track from Wilmington to Weldon in Halifax County. What distinction did the railroad hold when it began operation?** It was the longest railroad in the world when it began operation.

Source: [http://thomaslegion.net/wilmington\\_and\\_weldon\\_railroad\\_history.html](http://thomaslegion.net/wilmington_and_weldon_railroad_history.html) (accessed February 17, 2012).

**3 - During the Civil War, the W&WRR was a 160½ mile railroad that was subject to attack from Union occupied eastern North Carolina. Who was responsible for repairing any damages inflicted by Union raiding parties? Colonel Sewall L. Fremont** was the chief engineer and superintendent of the Wilmington & Weldon before and during the war. Fremont was a West Point engineering graduate and a pre-war friend of William T. Sherman. Early in the war, Fremont had joined the Confederate Army and directed the construction of many fortifications in the Cape Fear region. It was Fremont who named the earthworks at Federal Point after Charles Frederick Fisher; the commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry who had died at the Battle of Manassas on July 21, 1861. Fremont and Fisher had been pre-war friends; Fremont was chief engineer of the W&WRR and Fisher was president of the North Carolina Railroad.

Fremont's railroad experience made him more important to the Confederate cause while with the W&WRR than as an army engineer.

On July 23, 1863, Fremont corresponded with General W.H.C. Whiting about a Union raid that had been made on Rocky Mount, Tarborough and possibly Wilson. A paragraph from that letter made clear the importance of the W&WRR to the cause, "It seems to me, general, that the time has fully arrived for the Government to take some efficient steps to defend the line of this road, at all times so important to the defense of the country, and especially the Atlantic frontier, is to be maintained."

**Sources:** Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr., *The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope* (Campbell, California: Savas Publishing Company, 1997), p. 37-38; Letter to W.H.C. Whiting, July 21, 1863, United States War Department, *The War of Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records on the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), Series 1 – Vol. 27 (Part II), p. 975.

**4- Who were the Heroes of America and what part did they play in North Carolina during the Civil War?** In 1860-1861, North Carolina's people were in a divided state on the question of separation from the Union. The large land owners and pro-secession politicians were able to call a convention and successfully lead North Carolina from the Union; however, there remained a large number of men who opposed this action. The **Heroes of America** led active opposition the Confederate government and sought to disrupt their actions in North Carolina. Concentrated in the nine Piedmont counties known as the Quaker Belt, the men organized in a

style of the Freemasons with rituals, signs, countersigns, special handshakes, and oaths of loyalty. They encouraged spies, guided escaped Union POWs, fellow Unionists, and run-away slaves to safety in eastern Tennessee and Kentucky. Made up of mostly working-class whites and small farmers, the Heroes resisted conscription which gave exemptions to slave owners. The Heroes spread east to Raleigh, Goldsboro, Kinston, and the coastal area.

There was evidence that the Heroes were active in the Wilmington area. The State built a saltworks on Masonboro Sound and many of the positions were filled by men from the Piedmont. General W.H.C. Whiting believed that most of these men were members of the Heroes of America and that they should be given to the army. Whiting felt that there was no trust to be given to what he saw as treasonous men.

The “peace movement” favored by the H.O.A. continued throughout the war, but the efforts of the Confederate government to end their pacifist activities never lessened. The people of North Carolina found themselves involved with a “rebellion within a rebellion.”

**Source:** Phillip Gerard, “A Separate Peace,” *Our State*, November 2011; Gordon B. McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina’s Civil War Governor and Gilded Age Political Leader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 158, 160, 224-225, 227, 232.

**5 – What rolls did the *North Carolina Standard* and *Fayetteville Observer* play during the Civil War.** These were newspapers that editorialized the opposing political views of their editors.

**William H. Holden**, editor of the *North Carolina Standard*, was a supporter of the peace movement. He had long been known as a strong supporter of the common folks of the state. Holden was accused of being a support of the Heroes of American; he was also the peace candidate for governor against Zeb Vance in 1864. Holden drew controversy like a lightening rod drew bolts from the sky. In September 1863, Georgia troops passing through Raleigh made Holden pay when they attacked the offices of Holden’s newspaper.

**Edward J. Hale**, editor of the *Fayetteville Observer*, was a strong pro-Confederate supporter who clashed with anyone who voiced opinions dissimilar to his views. The *Fayetteville Observer* had much influence within the state and the South before and during the Civil War. Per Phillip Gerard, Hale’s actions made his paper one of three targets that William T. Sherman wanted to destroy when he and his army entered North Carolina. The others were the Confederate Armory at Fayetteville and Joe Johnston’s army. Sherman destroyed the newspaper plant in March 1865. The pen may have been mightier than the sword, but Sherman burnt the pen, paper and presses.

**Sources:** Gordon B. McKinney, *Zeb Vance: North Carolina’s Civil War Governor and Gilded Age Political Leader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 89-369,