

The Runner



Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Our Dinner meeting will be held on **Thursday, 8 February 2018** at the Blockade Runner Beach Resort (Nighthawk Room) located at **275 Waynick Blvd, Wrightsville Beach**. Come early – the meeting starts promptly at 6:30 p.m. See **cfcwrt.org** for details of future speakers and their subjects.

******* February 2018 Program *******

From Fields of Fire and Glory: Letters of the Civil War

Rod Gragg will entertain attendees at our Dinner Meeting with the stories penned by individual soldiers sharing their Civil War experiences:

A young soldier, mortally wounded, pens a last letter to his beloved father from the battlefield. That letter, along with 19 others from the Civil War, are reproduced here in facsimile for readers to open, remove, and read, just as the original recipients did. Conveying the personal drama behind the battles of the Civil War with unrivaled verisimilitude, this unusual volume reveals the triumphs, loneliness, fears, and struggles of ordinary men and women facing their role in history, such as a letter from a former slave to his wife, ringing with hope for a future of freedom together.

Rod Gragg is an award-winning Civil War historian who has written a number of books on the subject including *The Civil War Quiz and Fact Book*. He lives in South Carolina.

******* Raffle Winners *******

Raffle Master: Ed Gibson

If you have books, prints, or other items that you would like to donate to the raffle, contact Ed Gibson (egibson759@aol.com) before our next meeting. ***The raffle is one of the components which allow the CFCWRT to fund our activities and our speakers.*** Please take part in our raffle by contributing items and/or purchasing tickets.

***Stonewall in the Valley
Battle Cry of Freedom***

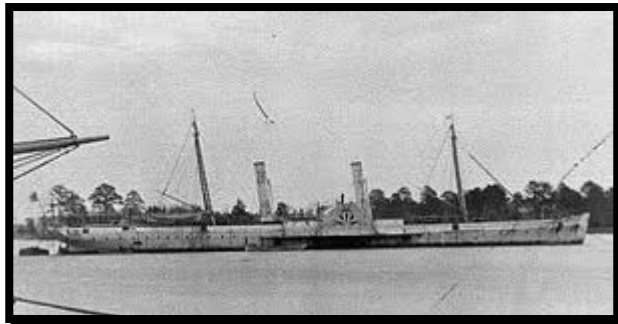
Ed Gibson
George Holston

Civil War Blunders
Dahlgren Affair
Him on the One Side and Me on the Other
Brave Men
Failure in the Saddle
Lee Takes Command
Carrying the Flag
Confederate States Navy
Divided Waters
Civil War Day by Day
Stuart's Calvary
Nothing But Victory

Edward Holston
 Bill Jayne
 John Bolger
 Bob Cooke
 Joe George
 Jack McGarrie
 David Munnikhuysen
 Jim Wagner
 Bill Jayne
 Dale Lear
 Joe Hack
 Jim Wagner



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



Blockade Runner the *Robert E. Lee*

If you have member news or news about Civil War events that you think would be of interest to CFCWRT membership, send me an email with the details to tpwinstead@gmail.com. Thank you.

1 – Happy Valentine's Day!!!!!!!

2 - Cape Fear 3 and the **Blockade Runner** Chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy will be collecting old medicine/pill bottles for overseas uses in medical missions.

Remove the labels and donate bottles to this worthy cause. Please give used bottles to **Linda Lashley** at our next RT meeting.

3 – Two Weeks of Fury – Wise’s Fork, Monroe’s Crossroads, Averasboro, Bentonville - September 28-30, 2018

The Two Weeks of Fury Symposium will begin with an optional half-day on Friday, Sept. 28, in Kinston. Friday evening will include a key-note lecture at The Barn at [BroadsLab](#). Saturday's tours begin with a rare trip to Monroe's Crossroads battlefield and a guided tour of Civil War Fayetteville and Averasboro. Saturday will wrap with an intimate meet and greet at Bentonville Battlefield featuring heavy hors d'oeuvre and drinks. Sunday will conclude with a guided tour of Bentonville Battlefield.

Only 100 tickets will be sold, with a limit of 25 being sold for the optional Friday, half-day. Tickets include two meals, snacks, water, soda, and Saturday evening hors d'oeuvre and drinks. Your price includes venue admissions and a copy of Mark Moore's *Historical Guide to Bentonville*, an excellent map guidebook of the Carolinas Campaign. The price for the event will be \$350 or \$395 if you include the Kinston trip on Friday afternoon.

Contact (910) 594-0789 amanda.brantley@ncdcr.gov

I attended a similar symposium some years ago with many of the same speakers. I highly recommend this event.

******* January 2018 Program *******

Amongst Immortals Raging: Gettysburg’s 3rd Day Begins

Marshall Conyers provided those in attendance at our January Meeting with a different look at the Battle of Gettysburg. In Marshall’s own words:



Pickett’s Charge



Marshall Conyers

Though *Amongst Immortals Raging* is organized almost exclusively around Pickett's attack, it is not actually a tale of war so much as it is an epic journey deep into the hearts and minds of those men who fought there on that bloody bygone day. True, the impending feel of battle does imbue nearly its every written word, yet within its pages too, are all the ordinary emotions of men caught up in that most extraordinary world which is war ... *justice* is there, and *truth* and *mercy* and *friendship*, and even the *innocence* of youth ... all juxtaposed upon the tools of The Reaper's grim and violent trade ... muskets peppering, cannon roaring, bayonets shimmering amidst the raging cataclysm of battle ... and yet, ever resounding over all, one senses that hallowed call to *Duty*, *Honor*, *Country* that set Gray against Blue in a small town in Pennsylvania, then called them forth to arms and to *immortality* under valor's bright and fleeting banner

Conyer's presentation of his Iliad-style work was certainly "different" than our traditional treatment of Civil War history; however, that difference was interesting.

Editor

******* Grant *******

Bill Jayne has taken the task to read Ron Chernow's new book about U.S. Grant.

Below Bill shares his thoughts about the first three hundred pages:

Grant by Ron Chernow is a massive biography running to almost 1,100 pages when you count the notes, bibliography and index. Yet, it's a fairly easy read...except that it's so heavy the reader can't tackle it in a casual way. Chernow is, primarily a writer with a long career as an author of magazine articles and books. He's best known for his biography of George Washington and the book about Alexander Hamilton that formed the basis of the successful Broadway play.

I'm only about a third of the way through the book but our editor has prevailed upon me to provide a report on my impressions so far. I've just finished the Chattanooga chapters and it's early 1864 and newly minted Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant has just arrived in Washington. Grant hasn't yet faced off against Robert E. Lee in the Overland Campaign.

I'm really looking forward to the next sections of the book. I've long felt that Grant was clearly the greatest general of the Civil War and so far this book has only reinforced that opinion. At least since 1932 with the publication of *Grant and Lee* by J.F.C. Fuller, serious students of the Civil War have had to dig below the superficial assessment that Lee was a genius of the military art and Grant a mere butcher who effectively used his numerical and material advantages to vanquish his more talented foe. So, my prejudice shouldn't be viewed as iconoclastic.

Lee was often tactically brilliant and he had a great sense of the weaknesses of his various opponents like McClellan and Hooker. He exploited the defensive advantages of the Army of Northern Virginia and his knowledge of the geography of the theater to a greater degree than any other Confederate general could have, in my opinion. My meaning is illustrated by the fact that the Army of Northern Virginia maintained a working line of communication to its crucial sources of supply until the beginning of 1865 when Ft. Fisher fell and Lee was forced to leave his lines below Petersburg. Lee was always able to fall back on his lines of communication to give himself a tactical advantage or to prevent a truly decisive victory by the Army of the Potomac, and he exploited that time after time.

I don't think he had as great a sense of the political milieu in which he fought and the weakness of his army, however. In a strategic sense, Sharpsburg and Gettysburg were probably mistakes because they not only risked so much of his army's strength (superlative lieutenants, a core of hard-fighting dedicated infantry) but because they turned the tables and put the Army of the Potomac back in a strong defensive position that virtually assured that they would not suffer a decisive defeat. That is, even if defeated, they would fall back on a short line of communication to their base along the Washington-Baltimore-Philadelphia line. Lee made the Army of Northern Virginia so vulnerable that a better general than McClellan might easily have ended the war at Sharpsburg.

Anyway, Chernow's bio makes it clear that Grant combined a clearer sense than Lee of the political milieu. He knew, I think, before almost anyone else that in order to win, the Union must conquer the South. The war would not be won by one big victory. The way he maneuvered and fought his army from Ft. Donelson to Shiloh to Corinth to Vicksburg was superlative. By July of 1863 with the fall of Vicksburg, Grant had amputated a huge source of supplies, manpower and transportation from the Confederate war effort. The territory taken comprised western Kentucky, much of Tennessee, western Mississippi and much of Louisiana.

In accomplishing that end, he made mistakes but didn't lose his nerve and quickly grasped how to make the most of the situation at hand. He controlled the battlefield masterfully at Shiloh and turned defeat into victory where Lee, perhaps trying desperately to grasp the opportunity for a "Waterloo," really lost control and made bad decisions on the second and third days at Gettysburg, for example.

I think Chattanooga is another example of Grant's nimbleness. It's also an example of his professional acumen in realizing that a starving, cold, dirty army was unlikely to be a winning army. He quickly got his army back on its feet while Bragg allowed his army—fresh from a great victory at Chickamauga—to deteriorate and lose its morale even though it held the high ground and dominated the approaches to the city. Chernow often documents how Grant was able to simultaneously consider tactical, logistical and geographical factors and quickly issue clear orders to accomplish his ends.

Finally, I think Chernow's book is a great addition to the literature because it really gives a believable sense of who Grant was as a human being. We know who Lee was, a patrician knight, and there have been illuminating biographies of Jackson and most other Confederate leaders but it's always been very difficult to develop a sense of who Grant was as a general, a political leader and a human being.

One of the reasons Grant has so often been underestimated is because he clearly had problems of human weakness. He was unsuccessful in his civilian endeavors in the 1850's, his family was often an embarrassment and...he did have a drinking problem. Chernow makes a convincing case that Grant's drinking was a kind of alcoholism that

made him terribly susceptible to binge drinking. He often went for long periods of time without taking a drink of any kind, not even a glass of wine with dinner or a “medicinal” dose of brandy or whiskey. Yet, there were times when he was incapacitated by drink but not when actively engaged against the enemy. I think this book will go a long way toward fleshing out Grant’s unusual and puzzling personality.

I look forward to Chernow’s handling of the Overland Campaign and Grant’s role in Reconstruction. Reconstruction is a pivotal period in US history and it’s difficult to unravel all the threads of personality and permutations of policy. The failures and lost opportunities of the period haunt us to this day. I look forward to reading that part of the biography.

Bill Jayne