



# THE RUNNER



JANUARY 2020

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1



*Becky Sawyer: The Letters of Sidney Stockbridge, aboard the USS Pawtuxet, James River, April 1865*

Becky Sawyer, interpreter and collections manger at the Fort Fisher State Historic Site, will speak about a trove of long lost letters written by a mariner aboard a U.S. Navy ship in the last days of the war.



A native of the St. Louis, Missouri, area, Becky earned a Masters degree in public history from UNCW. She is also a highly accomplished reenactor who researches costumes from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to enrich the experience of history.

Over the course of the past three years, with the assistance of Rick Morrison, Becky and other staff of the Fort Fisher State Historic Site have been transcribing letters belonging to Sidney Stockbridge who served as a clerk on the *USS Pawtuxet* in the second battle of Fort Fisher in January 1865. These letters are on loan from Joe Stockbridge of Surry, Maine, the great nephew of Sidney Stockbridge.

After the fall of Wilmington on 22 February 1865, the *USS Pawtuxet*, proceeded to Beaufort NC, the Union base for the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Once ready for more sea service, the *Pawtuxet*, transferred to the James River Squadron in Virginia.

By March 18, 1865, the James River Squadron comprised at least 42 war ships, including several monitors and other ironclads. With the Union's final push towards destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia, Stockbridge writes about daily life on the James River including seeing the hustle and bustle of City Point, the obscure spot where the Appomattox River joins with the James River about 30 miles below Richmond.

As the headquarters of the combined Union force, City Point was one of the busiest seaports in the world in 1865. Grant had somewhere in the neighborhood of 150,000 well fed and well equipped troops in the vicinity to oppose Lee's rapidly dwindling army of about 55,000 poorly equipped and under nourished soldiers.

The culminating Civil War campaigns in the Eastern Theater are seen as titanic clashes of great armies led by the preeminent generals of the war: Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant of the U.S. Army and the Confederate paladin, Lieutenant General Robert E. Lee. Without a doubt, land forces dominated the Overland Campaign, the Siege of Petersburg and the Appomattox Campaign, but maritime forces were crucial to victory.

U.S. Navy dominance of the sea lanes and inland waterways allowed Grant to continually move his forces around the right (eastern) flank of Lee's army.

**NEXT PRESENTATION**

- ◆ Thursday, Jan. 9th
- ◆ **Becky Sawyer:** The Letters of Sidney Stockbridge, aboard the USS Pawtuxet
- ◆ 6:30 Social 7:00 Meeting
- ◆ Harbor UMC  
4853 Masonboro Loop  
Wilmington



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

<i>Trivia Questions</i>	2
<i>USS Pawtuxet</i>	3
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	4
<i>Trivia Answers</i>	4
<i>Army of TN</i>	5
<i>Member News</i>	6
<i>Links</i>	7

(Continued on page 2)



*Becky Sawyer: The Letters of Sidney Stockbridge, aboard the USS Pawtuxet, James River, April 1865, cont.*



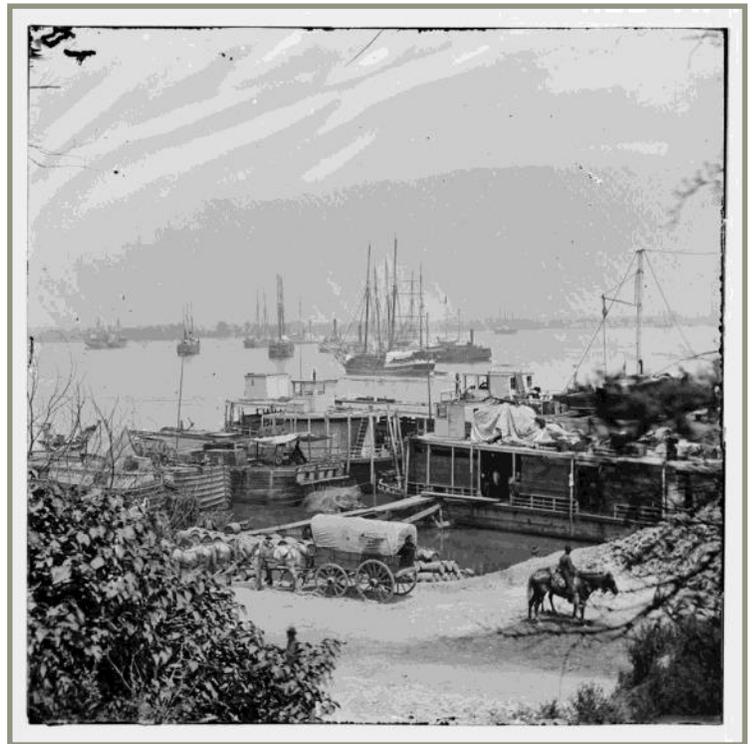
SIDNEY STOCKBRIDGE

Vast quantities of supplies and huge numbers of reinforcements moved safely and reliably aboard ships from both northern ports and southern bases like Beaufort, NC, and Port Royal, SC. Conversely, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was totally dependent on land transportation for its supplies and reinforcements and those routes were subject to interdiction and damage.

Once again, Clerk Stockbridge had a front row seat for historic events. He participates in the end of the war in a very personal way. He writes about the fall of Richmond and his friendship with a southern belle, but the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln fills him with dread.



CITY POINT, VIRGINIA



*Trivia Questions*

1. Trivia question related to the mid-December, 1864, Battle of Nashville: Confederate troops were being force marched north into Tennessee over frozen ground without adequate footwear or food. Rations had dwindled to a few grains of meal or kernels of corn per day.  
Upon reaching the vicinity of Nashville they began to search for food. One Texas soldier related to his family, that "*over in the valley we spotted a tree laden with fruit*" and indeed they had. What was the fruit?
2. Who said "I will be in my coffin before I fight under your command!"



## *The USS Pawtuxet*

USS Pawtuxet, named after a river in Rhode Island was a side wheel steamer launched by the Portsmouth Navy Yard on 19 March 1864. She was delivered to the Navy at New York City on 18 May 1864. She was commissioned on 26 August 1864, with Comdr. J. H. Spotts commanding.

Following commissioning, Pawtuxet was ordered to the Grand Banks to join the quest for the Confederate raider Tallahassee, but before she could get underway Tallahassee had returned safely to Wilmington. Pawtuxet was then ordered south to join the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Joining the 3rd Division in October she was ordered to cruise off the Carolina coast, primarily between Capes Lookout and Fear. At the end of December she bombarded the defenses at Wilmington in support of the first assault against Fort Fisher. Returning on 13 January 1865, she again turned her guns on that fort;

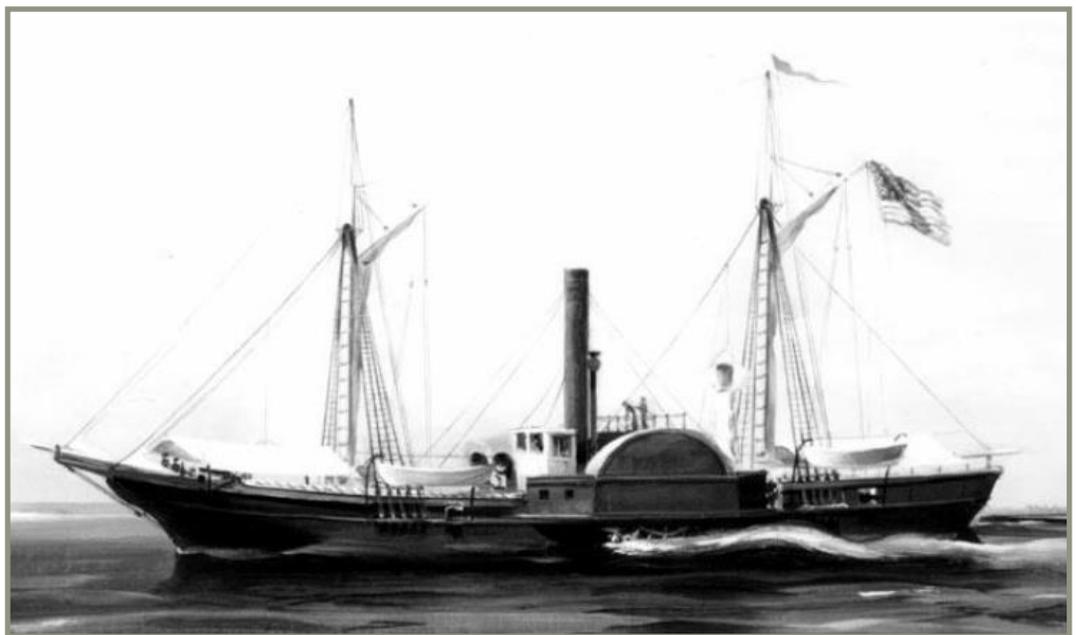
sent men and boats to participate in the successful assault on the 15th; then resumed blockade duties. Shifted to the Virginia coast in April, she was decommissioned at New York on 15 June 1865, and was sold on 15 October 1867.

### General Characteristics

Type:	Paddle steamer
Tonnage:	974 long tons
Length:	205 ft
Beam:	35 ft
Draft:	9 ft 3in
Depth of hold:	11 ft 6in
Speed:	14 knots (16 mph)

### Armament:

- 2 x 100-pounder Parrott rifles
- 4 x 9 in Dahlgren smoothbores
- 2 20-pounder Parrott rifles
- 2 x 24-pounder howitzers



USS PAWTUXET

## Upcoming Events

### January 18-19, 2020 [The 155th Commemoration of the Second Battle of Fort Fisher](#)

This two-day, family-friendly event will commemorate the 155th anniversary of the second battle of Fort Fisher. The program will feature a tactical battle scenario (1 pm Sat and 10 am Sun) with hundreds of reenactors in period uniforms. It will also include living history demonstrations, musket demonstrations, artillery firings, period music, guided tours, and special guest speakers to educate and entertain. While the program is free and open to the public, donations are appreciated.

### January 23, 2020 [Civil War and Reconstruction Quiz Bowl](#)

Kick off the new year with Fayetteville's Museum of the Cape Fear's 19th annual Civil War Quiz Bowl. Contestants test their knowledge of trivia, tactics and history as they are assailed with questions covering all aspects of the War Between the States. The questions will challenge the most avid Civil War buff. Contestants of all ages welcome. Prizes will be awarded for both the adult and student (16 and under) winners. Registration will be accepted until 15 spaces are filled. You can register at the door or call the Museum of the Cape Fear and sign up ahead of time. The Civil War Quiz Bowl is open to the public, with plenty of room for friends, family and spectators. Event starts at 7pm.

### February 15-16, 2020 [The 155th Anniversary of the Fall of Fort Anderson](#)

Join Fort Anderson as they commemorate the 155th Anniversary of the Fall of Fort Anderson with two days of historic entertainment. Saturday and Sunday come out to watch as civil war living history actors re-live battles demonstrating the heart of both sides of the engagements. In addition, enjoy Civil War historians and browsing the pristine and normally inaccessible northern and southern batteries of the fort.

## New Books

*Such Anxious Hours: Wisconsin Women's Voices from the Civil War* by [Jo Ann Daly Carr](#) *Such Anxious Hours* features letters and diaries of eight Wisconsin women during the Civil War.

*To My Best Girl: Courage, Honor, and Love in the Civil War: The Inspiring Life Stories of Rufus Daves and Mary Gates* by [Steve Magnusen](#) This is the extraordinary true story of a citizen soldier and the girl he loves, as both become embroiled in the cauldron of our nation's Civil War.

## Trivia Answers

1. They had spotted a frost bitten persimmon tree laden with fruit. Texan Milton Cox was to later state "*as I look back over my whole life, never have I tasted any food that would compare to these persimmons*".
2. Nathan Bedford Forrest stated these words to Major General Joseph Wheeler on the night of February 3rd, 1863 during a bout of recrimination in the wake of a failed attack on the Union garrison at Dover, Tennessee.

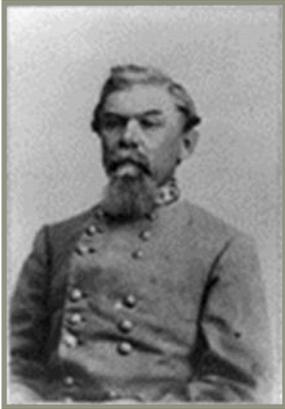
## 155<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Last Grand Charge of the Army of Tennessee”

### Bentonville Battlefield Tours

#### Reserve a Date

February 8, February 22, and March 6, 2020

Tours begins at 9:00 a.m..



As part of the 155th Anniversary of the 1865 Carolinas Campaign, Wade Sokolosky, noted author and historian of the campaign, will lead a special tour in commemoration of the historic “Last Grand Charge of the Army of Tennessee” at the Battle of Bentonville.

Come follow in the footsteps of the army as we explore the Bentonville battlefield examining critical aspects of the Army of Tennessee’s role in the battle: its movement to the Carolinas, organization and command, the final charge, and its failure south of the Goldsboro Road. Highlighting the tour is a detailed examination of the wonderfully preserved trenches dug by the army during the battle, parts of which are normally restricted to the public.

Cost is \$15 per person, a portion of which goes directly to Bentonville battlefield preservation. Tour is limited to 25 participants. To maximize time on the battlefield, participants will need to bring their lunch. A cooler will be on hand to keep drinks and food items. Please wear comfortable walking shoes and seasonal wear.

For information on how to reserve your spot contact Wade Sokolosky at (252) 646-5553 or email at [sokolosky1@aol.com](mailto:sokolosky1@aol.com)



## *Member News*

### **CFCWRT Upcoming Events**

February 13th            *Bert Dunkerly*: The Richmond Bread Riots  
March 12th                *Dr. E. V. Smith*: Chickamauga

### **Book Raffle**

If you have books, prints, or other items that you would like to donate to the raffle, contact Raffle Master [Ed Gibson](#) before our next meeting. The raffle is one of the components which the CFCWRT uses to fund our activities and our speakers. Please take part in our raffle by contributing items and/or purchasing tickets.

### **New Members - Welcome!**

Mike and Priscilla O'Brian  
Mary Margaret McEachern and Rob Dillow  
Raymond Rogers.

### **Wreaths Across America**

*Wreaths Across America* placed over 2.2 million wreaths on veterans graves throughout the United States and several overseas (European) locations on Saturday, 14 December, 2019.

As each wreath was placed at the head stone, the name of the fallen was said aloud, thus assuring that the veteran so honored, will not be forgotten.

The 2020 Wreaths Across America Day is Saturday, December 19th.

*Thank you for your participation!*

### **Silent Auction**

The Round Table is running a silent auction with donated items such as books, prints, memorabilia, etc., to raise money specifically to help fund the travel costs of our speakers. We pay travel costs for speakers and our budget limits us, generally, to speakers from neighboring states. It's advantageous for us that so much Civil War history is centered on Virginia, Tennessee and the Carolinas, but still those costs mount up and there are times when we have the opportunity to engage a speaker from a more distant location and we strive to present the best possible program we can. Look for the table outside the meeting area to see some of the items being offered and put in your bid.

A great example of the items being offered is a print by Jim Horton, a member of our round table. Jim is an outstanding artist who specializes in historical subjects and exhibits locally often. The item is a limited edition 24" by 10" giclée print of the Gate at Cemetery Hill in Gettysburg signed by the artist.

If you have anything you'd like to donate to the cause, please let us know. Contact Bill Jayne, Ed Gibson or Bruce Patterson. Thanks.



## Links

### [History of the American Civil War](#)

To present the history of the Civil War accurately and in a compelling way which honors all Americans.

### [Civil War - Richmond](#)

An online research project designed to collect documents, photographs, and maps pertaining to Richmond, Virginia, during the Civil War.

### [Civil War - Brooklyn](#)

This website explores Brooklyn during the Civil War by presenting primary source documents — photographs, letters, newspaper articles, illustrations, and more — that show what life was like during this period.

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## CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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You can find us on the Web! [Cfcwrt.org](http://Cfcwrt.org)

Visit us on Facebook: [CFCWRT](https://www.facebook.com/CFCWRT)



# QUEENSBORO

EMBROIDERED AND PRINTED APPAREL



# Best Western PLUS

THE RUNNER is the official monthly newsletter of the CFCWRT.

If you have member news or news about Civil War events that you think would be of interest to the CFCWRT membership, send an email with the details to the editor, [Sherry Hewitt](#). Thank you.

The [Cape Fear Civil War Round Table](#) is a non-profit organization made up of men and women who have a common interest in the history of the Civil War. The meetings include a speaker each month covering some aspect of the Civil War. This serves our purpose of encouraging education and research into that historical conflict.

Click here for membership information: [Membership Application](#)