

# Cape Fear Civil War Round Table



DECEMBER 2021

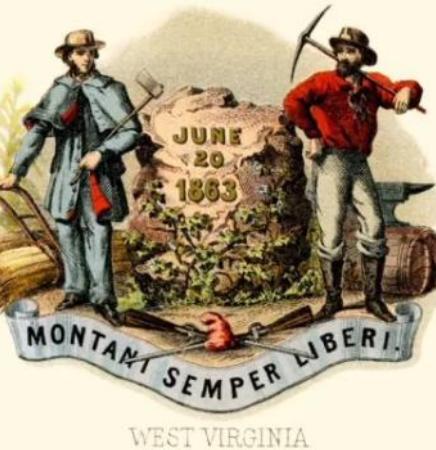
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VOLUME 3 ISSUE 11

## December Presentation: How WV Became a State

The creation of the state of West Virginia in the midst of the American Civil War is an often overlooked and little-known event to all but the serious Civil War history enthusiast. However, the story has been given more attention in the past decade, with at least two books published on the topic and another in progress. West Virginia's creation brought to light numerous legal and constitutional issues and highlighted intrastate sectional diversity on a level not seen elsewhere in the states. Even Confederate states with relatively high numbers of Union sympathizers like North Carolina and Tennessee did not schism as a result; only Virginia did. West Virginia was a region of a southern state that had more in common with its neighbors to the north than with its brethren to the east and its creation was wrapped up in issues of slavery, race, culture, and economics. Early in the war, the region was hotly contested, but



West Virginia State Seal



Andrew Duppstadt is the Education & Interpretation Supervisor for the North Carolina Division of State Historic Sites. He has a BA in history and an MA in public history from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.



(Continued on page 2)

## December Meeting

Thursday, Dec 9, 2021

Presenter:

**Andrew Duppstadt:  
How West Virginia  
Became a State**

6:30 Social 7:00 Meeting

Harbor UMC, Rm. 226  
4853 Masonboro Loop  
Wilmington  
(See map on [website](#))



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## December Presentation: How WV Became a State, cont.

Previously, he has worked at the CSS Neuse State Historic Site, Fort Fisher State Historic Site, and Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens. Andrew also serves as an Adjunct Instructor of History at UNC-Pembroke and Coastal Carolina Community College. He is Treasurer of the North Carolina Military Historical Society and serves on the boards of Civil War Trails, Inc. and the North Carolina Maritime History Council.

### Did you know...?

Stonewall Jackson was born in Clarksburg, Virginia in 1824.

Clarksburg, in Harrison County, was part of what became West Virginia in 1863.

There are writings which indicate that in Jackson's early childhood, he was called "The Real Macaroni", though the origin of the nickname and whether it really existed are unclear.



Battle Flag - 1st WV Veteran Infantry  
Listed on the flag are the battles in which they fought.

The U.S. state of West Virginia was formed out of western Virginia and added to the Union as a direct result of the American Civil War, in which it became the only modern state to have declared its independence from the Confederacy.

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November Presentation: Betty Vaughn, *Christmas in the Civil War*



Betty Vaughn, an artist, teacher and writer of historical fiction, narrated a PowerPoint presentation giving a comprehensive history of the traditions of Christmas going to their European origins and continuing to the evolution of customs in this country. She explained the differences in celebration between those in the North and the South and the underlying causes for the disparity between them. In the north it tended to be a quiet religious celebration in the home...after a day of work. The South followed more liberal English customs. The Dutch in New York were responsible for several of our traditions. The original Dutch customs were explained, as well as the way they would eventually be adapted and popularized. Thomas Nast, the famous German-born cartoonist who grew up in New York around the time of the Civil War, was responsible for many of our iconic symbols of Christmas. It is interesting to note Thanksgiving was declared a national holiday years before Christmas! The program discussed the Christmas hymns that were sung by our soldiers as they huddled by their campfires. The food, decorations, candy, cookies, and religious observations of the period were traced to their origin. The use of period photos and imagery are enhanced with automation and music where appropriate.

### Upcoming Events

#### Cape Fear Civil War Roundtable Speakers:

January 13th: **Ernest Dollar**, Author and Public Historian (Director, City of Raleigh Museum), speaking about "NC Military Operations in 1865"

February 10th: **Jim Horton**, Artist (Member of CFCWRT), speaking about his Civil War historic paintings

March 10th: **Charles Knight**, Author and Public Historian (Curator of Military History at NC Museum of History), speaking about his book *From Arlington to Appomattox: Robert E. Lee's Civil War Day by Day 1861-1865*

### Trivia Questions

1. What Union spy, destined to gain fame for a daring railroad exploit, won the confidence of Confederates by smuggling quinine to them?
2. What raiders, captured by Confederates, were treated as civilian spies because they were out of uniform?
3. Why was the death of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Hardin Helm, CSA, mourned in the White House?

Answers on Page 11



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### New Bern Battlefield Trip

On December 4th, members and friends of the Cape Fear Civil War Roundtable gathered for a trip to the New Bern Battlefield Park.

New Bern Battlefield Park is the ground where nearly one third of the Civil War *Battle of New Bern* occurred. The park is in near pristine condition: unmarked by development or agriculture, the “redans” or fighting positions remain as they were a century and a half ago. Today the Battlefield Park includes over 30 acres of the original battlefield. The Gateway Plaza leads to a unique 20 foot diameter color ground map and signage that provides an overview of the battle.



The park's Gateway Plaza provides an overview of the battlefield and effectively orients visitors. Guide Brian Kraus, in blue checked shirt, explains the map.

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## New Bern Battlefield Trip, cont.



The park has a large picnic shelter, restrooms and ample parking.



The Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad connected the port of Beaufort with the Wilmington and Weldon at Goldsboro and provided a line of attack for Union troops as they achieved a breakthrough in this area of the battlefield.



Brian Kraus points out a feature of the battlefield with preserved original earthworks in the background.



Swampland that covered part of the battle

## Friends of Fort Fisher

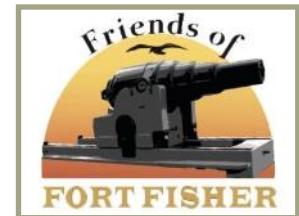
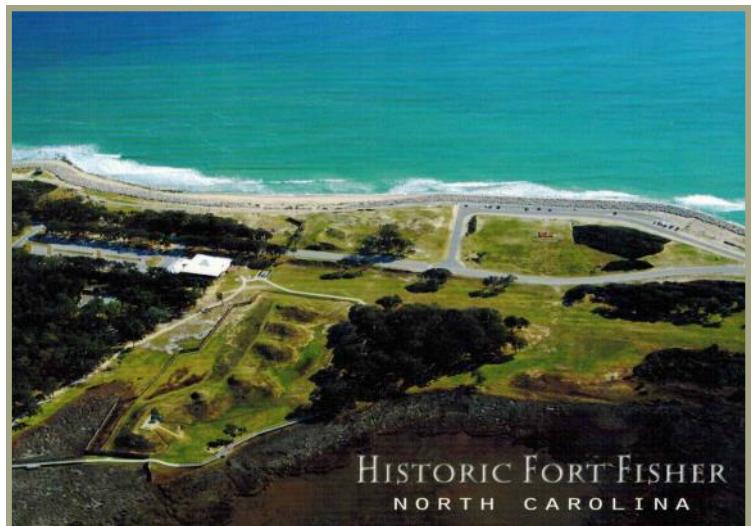
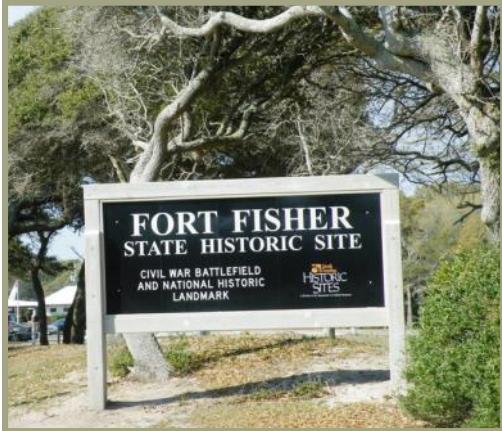
The Friends of Fort Fisher is a member driven non-profit organization devoted to supporting the activities and needs of Fort Fisher, an official North Carolina State Historic Site. Membership in the Friends consist of individuals, governments, foundations and businesses who make gifts that support programming, special events and site improvements.

The Friends are involved with the State in an exciting project to replace the outdated and inadequate visitors center built in the 1950's to accommodate 25,000 annual visitors. We will soon have 1 million people annually visiting the Fort making it the most visited state historic site in North Carolina. The Friends are working with the State to design and construct a new visitors center with modern exhibits which will highlight the history of the area and the Fort. Our goal is to focus on all the people who were involved in the initial construction of the Fort and those who defended or attacked the Fort in the January 1865 battle which was instrumental in ending the American Civil War.

The Friends invite you to join our membership and to also consider ways you can support the building campaign. One of the Friends goals is to construct three of the original 50 foot earthen mounds that was central to the Fort's defense and operations. The State will build the \$21M visitors center and the Friend will raise \$3M for the mounds. We invite your participation in this important mission.

Contributions can be made to Friends of Fort Fisher, 1610 S. Fort Fisher Boulevard, Fort Fisher, North Carolina 28449

In this month issue of The Powder Magazine is an article about William Keeler. Historical Specialist Becky Sawyer gave two CFCWRT presentations about Keeler's letters - one presentation was about Fort Fisher and the other about action on the James River in 1865.



Please check out the latest issue of their newsletter

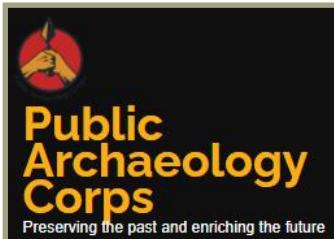
[The Powder Magazine](#).

Also check them out on [Facebook](#).

Fort Fisher, in New Hanover County south of Wilmington, was the largest earthwork fortification in the Confederacy and for four years (1861-65) played a vital role in the Southern war effort. Located at Confederate Point (now called Federal Point) the fort guarded the New Inlet entrance to the Cape Fear River and kept the port of Wilmington open to the blockade-runners, upon whom the Confederacy heavily relied to supply its armies. With the fall of Fort Morgan on Mobile Bay in August, 1864, Fort Fisher became the last important coastal fortification under Confederate control. When the fort fell to Union forces on January 15, 1865 -- after the heaviest naval bombardment of land fortifications known to that date -- the only remaining link between the already-doomed Confederacy and the outside world was broken.

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## The Public Archaeology Corps



Cape Fear Civil War Round Table member Pat Garrow recently lent his expertise to the excavation of a segment of the Confederate earthworks on the Cameron Art Museum grounds that date to The Forks Road battle that occurred immediately before the Confederate evacuation of Wilmington. That excavation exposed the original ground surface beneath the earthworks during dedication of a statute dedicated to the US Colored Troops involved in that battle.

Pat is a (semi) retired professional archaeologist who has worked in the field for more than 50 years. He holds a MA in Archaeology from the University of Georgia. He recently went back to The Chieftains Museum (Major Ridge Home) in Rome, Georgia, to lead the investigation of a site thought to have been a kitchen at the home of the Cherokee chief who was one of the signers of the Treaty of New Echota that led to the forced removal of the tribe. Pat originally worked on the Chieftains site in 1969-71. He is pictured at the far right of the photo below.

A native of Newport News, Virginia, he is also the author of *Changing Sides: Union Prisoners of War Who Joined the Confederate Army*.

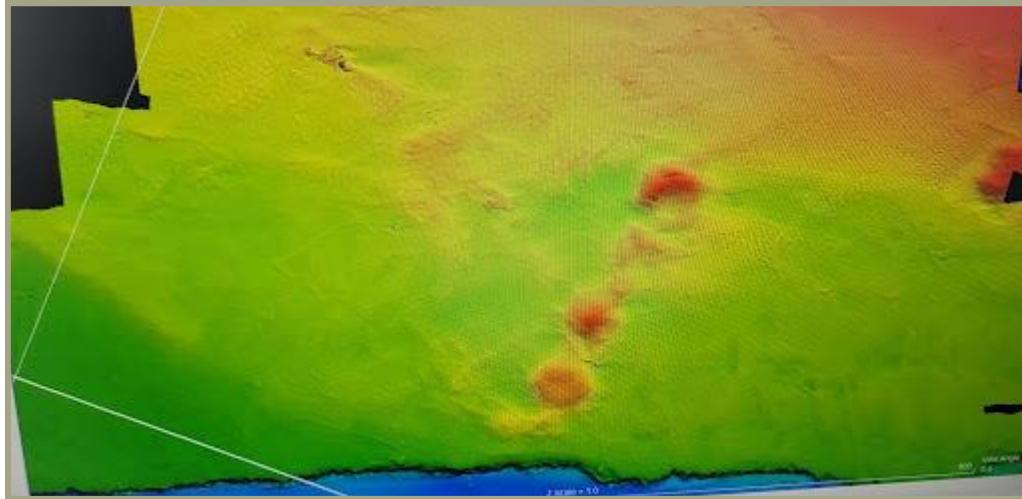
The Forks Road excavation was an example of the public education/public outreach projects undertaken by Public Archaeology Corps (PAC). PAC has a long-term excavation underway at 10 S. Front Street in downtown Wilmington. That excavation has encountered archaeological deposits from the 18th century, and will continue on selected weekends.

Membership in the PAC is open to all interested parties. Please go to the [PAC website](#) to become a member and for additional information and for notices of upcoming excavations.

The Public Archaeology Corps is a 501(C) (3) nonprofit organization that is dedicated to public education, public outreach, and researching endangered archaeological sites on private land that are not protected by federal or state laws. The PAC includes professional archaeologists, historians, and interested citizens.



## Archaeologists Locate Underwater Artifacts



Sonar image of four Confederate cribs in Savannah River (USACE, Savannah)

Archaeologists using sonar to scan the bottom of the Savannah River have located the remnants of four underwater obstructions placed by Confederate defenders during the Civil War.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Savannah office last week released a video and press release on the discovery of the so-called cribs, which were intended to prevent a Federal attack on the Georgia city.

"A crib is actually the wooden structure that would have held rubble, in this case mostly bricks," Will Wilson, an archaeologist with Commonwealth Heritage Group said in the video. "This is a fairly simple frame system that is (put) in place really to hold the rubble and provide an obstruction to ships that might want to pass up the river."

Wilson and others recorded 3D images ahead of dives on two of the crib sites. The dives are underway, Corps officials said this week.

While tourists coming to the popular coastal destination gaze upon the supertankers coming from or to the Atlantic Ocean, they likely have no idea what lies beneath the river's surface: Remnants of vessels, pieces of Native American pottery that washed down stream, and other items deposited over the centuries.

The Corps began new fact finding and artifacts recovery in the past couple weeks.

The project follows the discovery earlier this year of three historic artillery pieces in the river.

The cannons appear to have been made in the mid-1700s, and some theorize they may have been carried by the HMS Rose, a British warship that took part in the siege of Savannah during the Revolutionary War.

The Rose was scuttled to block the channel from French ships that might come to the aid of colonists trying to retake the city.

"A definitive conclusion on their origins is still pending and may require future conservation efforts to study any identifying marks that may tie the artifacts to a specific vessel or



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### *Archaeologists Locate Underwater Artifacts, cont.*

wreck," the Corps said.

It's possible the artillery pieces were on a Confederate warship, such as the CSS Georgia, which was used in conjunction with cribs to defend the city.

The cannons were found this past February in the general vicinity of where the Rebel ironclad was scuttled in December 1864 during the Civil War. Most of the ironclad's wreckage was removed a few years back as part of the Corps' deepening of the Savannah harbor.

The ironclad itself was an obstruction: Too slow to travel downstream and engage the enemy, the CSS Georgia was a floating battery stationed near Fort Jackson, another defensive bastion a few miles east of downtown.



**Confederate torpedoes in Charleston at war's end (Library of Congress)**

Smaller batteries dotted the river banks toward Fort Pulaski, near Tybee Island. The fort fell to Union forces in 1862 and the city was effectively bottled up for the remainder of the conflict.

In its press release, the Corps said investigators this spring "found additional artifacts related to the cannons on the river bottom. The exact number and types of artifacts re-

maining in the Savannah River will be determined through the current and upcoming investigations, and these materials will be recovered for further study."

Corps spokesman Billy Birdwell told the Picket on Tuesday that the crib dives and artifact recovery are part of necessary clearing for ongoing deepening of the harbor.

He said divers are working in an area filled with all kinds of debris, from before and after the Civil War. Dozens of cribs were placed in the river during the Civil War.

The Confederacy used a wide array of weapons and obstructions to defend against advances on Savannah from the sea. Besides forts and warships, wooden cribs, pile dams, torpedoes (mines), snags, logs and dozens of shipwrecks were employed.

A 2007 report by New South Associates on the CSS Georgia said the ironclad was situated to protect obstructions from Federal wrecking parties.

"The obstructions themselves were double-lines of sunken structures, comprised of cribs put together with 18 to 20-inch timbers, and loaded with bricks. Except for a small opening to allow Confederate patrol boats to go in and out, these obstructions stretched across the navigable width of the river. In the south channel, these cribs were reported to have a height of 30 to 35 feet," the report says.

Shore batteries supported Fort Jackson.



## Archaeologists Locate Underwater Artifacts, cont.

"There were two lines of obstructions in the vicinity of Fort Jackson. The line furthest downstream, on either side of the head of Elba Island, appears to have been Georgia's first home," New South Associates said. "A more irregular line of obstructions was also laid in the immediate vicinity of Fort Jackson, upstream from the first line. This line too appears to have had moorings for Georgia."

Wilson, the archaeologist speaking in the Corps video, said the cribs being investigated now are north of the river channel, a bit outside of freighter traffic.

An 1865 map in the collection of the Library of Congress shows a narrow waterway labeled "obstructed by cribs" not far from CSS Georgia and Fort Jackson. The river's flow has changed since then and some land that appeared in the map is now underwater. It is unclear exactly where these cribs being studied by the Corps were discovered.

A map by Robert Knox Sneden, a renowned Union mapmaker, shows Southern batteries and obstructions all the way to Fort Pulaski.

An 1874 account of the fortifications in and around Savannah includes this description:

*"The guns in these positions were supplied with an average of rather more than one hundred rounds of ammunition to the piece. As additional obstructions to an ascent of the Savannah river by the enemy, cribs, filled with brick and stone, had been sunk in the channel below the forts and under cover of their guns. Below the Thunderbolt battery the river was impeded by quantities of live oak logs."*

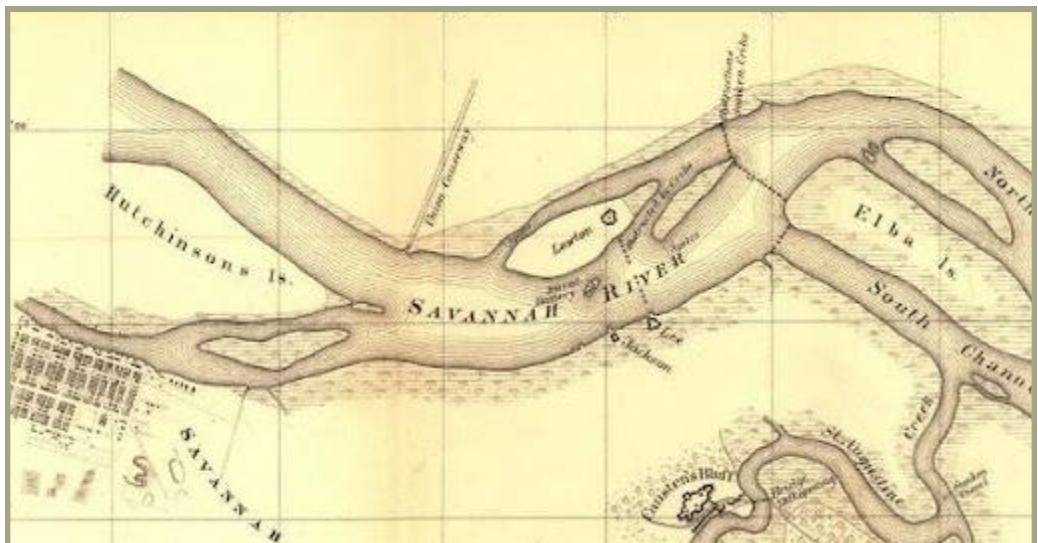
All of these defensive weapons did the trick: Savannah did not succumb to the Federal navy. Instead, it fell to the Union army during Sherman's March to the Sea.

After the war, contractors were hired to raise obstructions, including cribs, sunken vessels, piles, snags and torpedoes, so that commercial traffic could safely resume. They even got part of the CSS Georgia. (Interestingly, there were complaints during the Civil War of obstructions left over from the Revolutionary War).

W. Todd Groce, president and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society, told the Picket a friend in 1996 discovered a Confederate torpedo buried in the mud along the river and downstream from the city.

"It was one of the old wooden barrel types. He excavated it and kept it in a big tub of water so it would not dry out and disintegrate." The man wanted to donate it to the society, but it did not have proper facilities to care for and display it, Groce said.

Stay tuned to the Picket for an update on this project.



Fort Jackson, area of placed cribs (Library of Congress)

*"These submerged crib obstructions are believed to be some of the last remaining examples of this type of obstruction placed in the Savannah River during the Civil War," the Corps said.*



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## Trivia Answers

1. James J. Andrews was a Kentucky civilian who worked for the Union Army during the early years of the American Civil War. He led a daring raid behind enemy lines on the Western and Atlantic Railroad, known as **The Great Locomotive Chase**. Andrews and seven fellow raiders were caught at the end of the chase and executed by the Confederates on the charge of spying.
2. Army volunteers who followed Civilian James J. Andrews. In April 1862, Andrews proposed a scheme to Major General Ormsby M. Mitchel to seize a locomotive in northern Georgia and drive it to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he would rendezvous with Mitchel's attacking Union Army. On April 12th Andrews, another civilian, William "Bill" Campbell, and 24 volunteers from three Ohio infantry regiments garbed in civilian clothes, stole a locomotive known as **The General** at Big Shanty, near Kennesaw, Georgia. They headed north, destroying tracks and telegraph wires along the way in an effort to discourage pursuers and render the railroad useless for supplying the Confederate troops in Tennessee. William Allen Fuller, the conductor of the stolen train pursued the train hijackers on foot, by handcar, and in a variety of other locomotives, most notably the "Texas", in which he gave chase for 51 miles (82 km) in reverse. After an 87 miles (140 km) chase, the General lost power just north of Ringgold, Georgia, and Andrews and his raiders scattered. He was captured soon afterwards and identified as the leader. The captured military raiders were treated as civilian spies because they were out of uniform.
3. Benjamin Hardin Helm was Mary Todd Lincoln's brother-in-law. He came into Abraham Lincoln's Kentucky family circle when he married Emilie Todd, Mary Lincoln's half sister, in 1856.

Benjamin Hardin Helm had attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and graduated ninth in his class in 1851. After serving briefly on the Texas frontier before illness forced his resignation from the army, he studied law and entered practice in Elizabethtown before being elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives in 1855. A year before the Civil War started, he became an assistant inspector general in the Kentucky State Guard.

As the Civil War began, President Lincoln offered his brother-in-law a commission as paymaster in the Union army. He turned down the offer and helped recruit the First Kentucky Cavalry Regiment for the Confederate army. Commissioned a colonel, Helm quickly rose in rank when he was promoted to brigadier general after the battle of Shiloh and served under fellow Kentuckian General John C. Breckinridge in Mississippi and Louisiana. Eventually, General Helm became commander of the First Kentucky Infantry Brigade (the "Orphan Brigade") and was killed at the battle of Chickamauga in northern Georgia on September 20, 1863. When President Lincoln learned of his brother-in-law's death in battle, he was deeply moved and told one member of his cabinet that he felt like David in the Bible when he learned that his son Absalom had been killed.

Walt Disney made a movie of Andrews' exploits in 1956 called **The Great Locomotive Chase** starring Fess Parker as Andrews.



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## Civil War This and That

In the aftermath of battle, soldiers from both sides often swarmed over the field to loot the dead. A gold watch was seldom ignored and any wallet full of currency went into the pocket of the finder. But more than gold or currency, those who scavenged among the fallen wanted a special prize: **a good pair of shoes.**

Respectable women attached to the army performed various camp and nursing duties were known as **Vivi-andières**.

Transportation magnate **Cornelius Vanderbilt** prized each of his ships. But as a patriotic gesture, he agreed to sell a 1,700-ton vessel that bore his name to the Federal government - at his own price. He asked for, and received, exactly one dollar.

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## CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 15750

Wilmington, NC 28408

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

Visit us on Facebook: [CFCWRT](#)

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](#)

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