



The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

The *RUNNER*

Newsletter of The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Editor **Bob Cooke**

May 2009

Our next meeting will be 14 May 2009 at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound (Airlie Rd.)

Social Hour at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:30 p.m.



Our speaker for the May meeting is our own **Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr.** As past president of the **CFCWRT**, Chris is well known to our members, as well as the community at large. **Dr. Fonvielle** and **John McAden, Jr.** will speak to the RT about their new book, *Louis Froelich: Arms-Maker to the Confederacy*. Froelich was a Bavarian-born industrial engineer who immigrated to the United States in 1860. When the Civil War broke out in April 1861, Froelich was living with his wife and children in Wilmington, North Carolina. He soon established the Wilmington Sword Factory (later renamed the Confederate Arms Factory) to supply the Confederacy and the state with swords, sabers, bayonets and knives. Froelich moved his operations to Kenansville, North Carolina, after fore destroyed his Wilmington plant. Froelich was the largest supplier of edged weapons to North Carolina during the war.

Chris Fonvielle teaches in the Department of History at UNC Wilmington. He is the author of books and articles on Civil War and Cape Fear history, including *The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope* and *Historic Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear: An Illustrated History*.

Please join us for what promises to be a most interesting meeting!



Raffle Winners

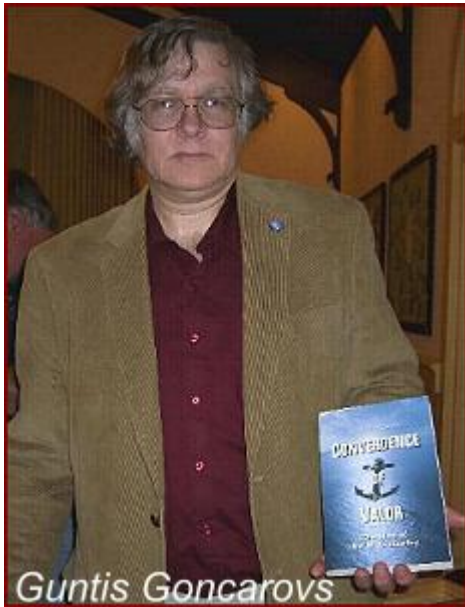
Sea of Gray- **Bill Carshaw**
Grant Comes East- **Steve Gunter**
Secession Debated- **Tommy Morgan**
Never Call Retreat- **Joe George**
Grant and Sherman- **Steve Gunter**
Print of Fort Fisher - **John Winecoff**
Convergence of Valor- **Bob Cooke**

Grand Prize Winner!

(Bruce Catton's 3 volume set)- **Ed Hickmon**



Lieutenant George E. Dixon, Arnold Becker, “Seamus” Lumpkin (possibly Simpkins), Frank Collins, J.F. Carlsen, Samuel Miller, James A. Wicks and Joseph Ridgaway, names which have only recently surfaced with the raising of the C.S.S. *Hunley* off Charleston, South Carolina. They have now attracted much interest because they are the last crew of that vessel and the first to successfully sink an enemy warship in an undersea attack. Just how these men came together at that time was the subject of our April speaker, **Guntis Goncarovs**. *Convergence of Valor* is the apt title of his book which investigates and gathers together what is known about these seamen. Forensic pathologists put together an impressive report on how they lived, (some had hard lives) while historians delved into the past to find bits of information that tied the men together even before serving on the *Hunley*. As an example of what he has discovered, **Mr. Goncarovs** said that Seaman Arnold Becker, a European sailor, had worked on riverboats before the war and had likely known George Dixon who also worked on the Mississippi steamers. The true convergence seems to have come aboard the C.S.S. *Indian Chief*, a naval receiving ship. Fully five of the men came from that vessel, not unusual at all, as **Mr. Goncarovs** pointed out, it was where an officer would go to fill out his crew. At least three of the crew were from Europe (Becker, Miller and Carlsen), only three of them were “true Southerners”: Ridgaway, Collins and Wicks.



Incidentally, the *Hunley* is still available for tours. Housed at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center in Charleston, a tour consists of being able to see the vessel in: “its 90,000 gallon conservation tank. Feel what it was like to be on the *Hunley* through interactive exhibits. Facial reconstructions of the *Hunley* crew. National Geographic documentary *Raising the Hunley* and model from [the] TNT movie the *Hunley*. Artifacts found during excavation of the submarine, including the legendary gold coin that saved the *Hunley* Captain’s life. Replica of the *Pioneer*, an early *Hunley* prototype.

Tours are open every Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday 12pm to 5pm. For more information go to www.hunley.org or call 1.877.4HUNLEY (1.877.448.6539)



Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle will also be presenting *Wilmington in the Balance*, a series of talks (two) and walks (1) in May. On Tuesday, 12 May at 7pm, “City at War” will “explore Wilmington’s transition from a quiet seaport to the most important city of the Confederacy. The following Tuesday (19 May) also at 7pm, **Dr. Fonvielle** will have you “Visualize Union and Confederate perspectives from the siege of Fort Fisher to the capture of Wilmington.” Both talks will be at the Cape Fear Museum (814 Market St.)

On Saturday 16 May, at 10am, he will lead a walk through Oakdale Cemetery (420 N. 15th St.) “Stories of Wilmington’s War Dead” is the third in the series sponsored by the Cape Fear Museum, the Bellamy Mansion the Historic Wilmington Foundation and the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society.

All three events- \$25; any two events- \$20; one event- \$10. For reservations contact Gareth Evans- 910.762.2511 or on line at garethevans@historicwilmington.org

