

# The Runner



## Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, 11 December** at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound Episcopal Church (101 Airlie Road). Social Hour begins at 7:00 p.m. (with light refreshments), meeting at 7:30. Guests, as always, will be most welcomed.

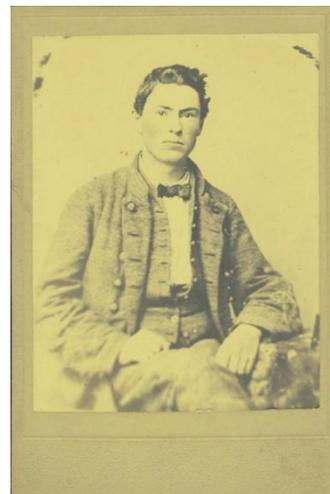
\*\*\*\*\* **December Program** \*\*\*\*\*

### **Digging and Dodging: Soldier Life at Petersburg, 1864-1865**

**Emmanuel Dabney**, Park Ranger at the Petersburg National Battlefield, will present the story of soldier's life during the 292 day long Petersburg Campaign. In lieu of battles, Emmanuel will look at the troop's relationship with the earthwork system, the varied use of artillery, sharpshooting, disease, and morale.



**Emmanuel Dabney**



**W. H. McLaurin**

William H. McLaurin of the 18<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry wrote years after the war, "The story of Petersburg will never be written; volumes would be required to contain it, and even those who went through the trying ordeal, can not recall a satisfactory outline of the weird and graphic occurrences of that stormy period." Yet, soldiers (including McLaurin) through letters, diaries, or memoirs attempted to make sense of the hell that was in the trenches before Petersburg.

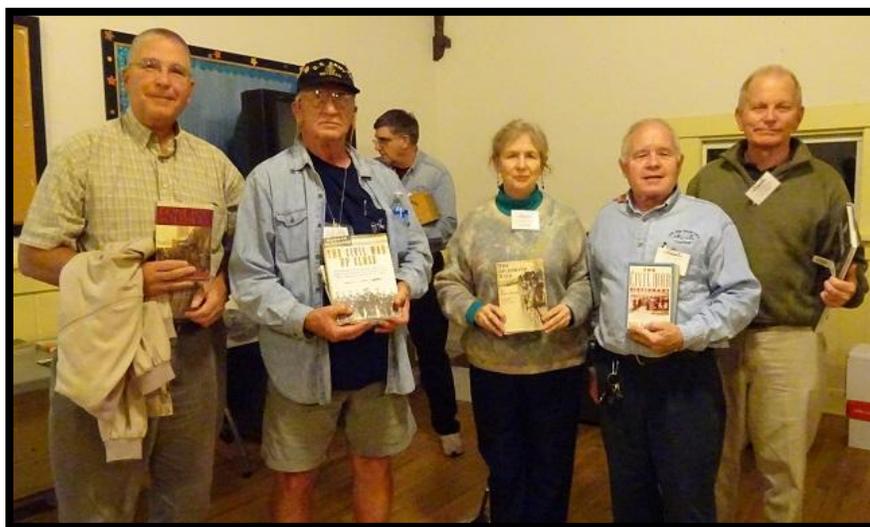
Emmanuel Dabney is an interpretive ranger at Petersburg National Battlefield. A native of South Side Virginia, he holds a degree in historic preservation from Mary Washington University and a masters degree in history from the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

**Editor**

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

**Raffle Master: Ed Gibson**

If you have books, prints, or other items that you would like to donate to the CFCWRT Raffle, contact Ed Gibson ([egibson759@aol.com](mailto: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 raffles by contributing items to the raffle or purchasing tickets.



*Gone for the Soldier, Confederate in the Attic ----- Michael Alban*

*Never Call Retreat, Civil War up Close ----- Tommy Chilcote*

*The Richmond Raid ----- Judy Ward*

*Civil War Dictionary ----- Bob Cooke*

*The Confederate Spirit ----- John Moore*

*True Tales of the South at War ----- Anonymous*

**\*\*\*\*\* December 1864 \*\*\*\*\***

The Confederacy suffered during December 1864. Sherman's "March to the Sea" brought total war to Georgia - the reality of this type warfare would never be forgotten by those who were in the path of this march. The Union victory before the gates of Nashville

witnessed the disintegration of the Confederate Army of Tennessee. Fort Fisher, the last major open port for blockade runners, was attacked on December 25 and would fall to a combined Union navy and army force in early January 1865.

By Christmas 1864, The Confederate States of America had a little over three months to exist. William T. Sherman's pronouncement in December 1864 had come full-circle –

You people speak so lightly of war. You don't know what you are talking about. War is a terrible thing. I know you are a brave, fighting people, but for every day of actual fighting, there are months of marching, exposure and suffering. More men die in war from sickness than are killed in battle. At best war is a frightful loss of life and property, and worst still is the demoralization of the people .....

You mistake, too, the people of the North, They are a peaceable people, but an earnest people and will fight too, and they are not going to let this country be destroyed without a mighty effort to save it.

Besides, where are your men and appliances of war to contend against them? The Northern people not only greatly outnumber the whites at the South, but they are a mechanical people with manufactures of every kind, while you are only agriculturists – a sparse population covering a large extent of territory, and in all history no nation of mere agriculturists ever made successful war against a nation on mechanics.....

The North can make a steam-engine, locomotive or railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or a pair of shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical and determined people on earth – right at your doors. You are bound to fail. Only in your spirit and determination are you prepared for war. In all else you are totally unprepared, with a bad cause to start with.

At first you will make headway, but as your limited resources begin to fail, and shut out of the markets of Europe by blockade as you will be, your cause will begin to wane .... If your people would but stop and think, they must see that in the end you will surely fail ....

Sherman held the view that was voiced by Dr. Melton McLaurin during his November presentation to our Round Table, "the South's foolish decision" to leave the Union was doomed from the start of hostilities.

An example that stands out in my memory from past reading: In 1864, the Harvard-Yale Regatta became an annual event ..... the North had been fighting the war with "one hand tied behind its back."

**Editor**

Source: Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* [New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1932], 138.

**\*\*\*\*\* Trivia Questions for December \*\*\*\*\***

**1 – How long did the Petersburg Campaign last?**

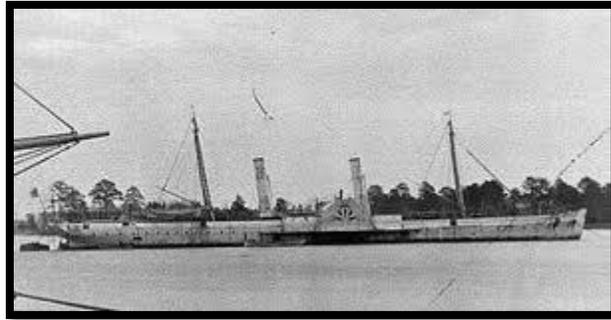
**2 – How many combatants were involved and how many casualties resulted from this extended Petersburg Campaign?**

3 – The Battle of the Crater was one of the well known fights during the Civil War. When did this battle occur?

4 – Per Dr. Melton McLaurin’s November 13<sup>th</sup> presentation, what was the Confederacy’s “only prayer” to gain its independence?

5 – Was King Cotton ever a serious advantage for the cause of Southerner Independence?

\*\*\*\*\* **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. Thank you.

1 – The Officers and Steering Committee members of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table wish each of you and your families a **Merry Christmas** and prosperous **New Year!** We would also like to thank each of you for your support of the Round Table and its efforts to encourage education and research into that historical conflict.



**2 – December 9<sup>th</sup>: Fort Fisher State Historic Site: Holiday Open House, Thursday. 10 am – 4 pm.**

Enjoy seasonal refreshments, decorations, and entertainment throughout the day, with performances by the Murray Middle School Jazz Band, John Golden as Blockade Runner Captain Roberts, and Dr. John Bennett and Masonboro Parlor presenting period music and dance. Enjoy a 25% discount in the Museum Shop, and join us for our 2014 Musket Raffle Drawing. Admission is free, and open to the public.

**3 – December 14<sup>th</sup>: Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Historic Site: An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Christmas, Sunday, 1 – 5:30 pm.**

Explore how the American colonists celebrated Christmas. Costumed interpreters will provide guided tours of St. Philips Anglican Church and historic Brunswick on the hour. During the program, you can enjoy Colonial refreshments in the Visitor Center, participate in traditional games, or try your hand at Moravian paper stars and other 18th century crafts. The highlight of

the evening will be an authentic period candlelit service in the ruins of St. Philips Anglican Church. The service will begin at 5:00pm and will conclude by 5:30pm.

4 – **Oakdale Luminary Tour** – November 9<sup>th</sup> – CFCWRT members Linda Lashley, Ed Gibson, Bob Cooke and Tim Winstead took part in this annual event.



**Confederate Mound: Alyssa Fizer, Ty Fizer, Linda Lashley, Tim Winstead**

4 – Brunswick Civil War Round Table – Speaker: One of the most distinguished names in Civil War history, **Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.** will be our special guest. He is the recipient of every major award given in Civil War history and a lecturer of national acclaim. Topic: *The Untold Civil War*.

Details at <http://www.brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com/meetings>.

#### **\*\*\*\*\* December 1864 \*\*\*\*\***

In December 1864, Sherman continued with his desired plan - an advance on Savannah. He reached the city before Christmas and offered the city to Lincoln as a Christmas gift. Sherman planned to use the rest of December to allow his troops to rest before marching north to link up with Grant in preparation for an all-out attack on Richmond.

December 1<sup>st</sup>: The Union army commanded by Schofield, entrenched itself in Nashville and dominated the Cumberland River.

December 2<sup>nd</sup>: Sherman was halfway to Savannah. His subordinates in Nashville were ordered by Washington to confront and defeat Hood's Army of the Tennessee. However, very poor weather hindered both armies.

December 8<sup>th</sup>: General Grant made it clear that he supported the President's wish that Hood should be attacked immediately by Schofield's men. Either that or he wanted Schofield replaced. The Union commander in Nashville was General Thomas, a subordinate of Schofield. He telegraphed Grant that his cavalry had no horses and that any attack not supported by the cavalry was doomed to failure.

**NOTE:** Schofield was actually subordinate to General Thomas. General Schofield's actions during the battles around Nashville did not support claims that Schofield made after the war. General George H. Thomas, the Rock of Chickamauga, made the Union victory at Nashville possible against Hood's army.

Source: "Schofield and Thomas: Blind Ambition at Nashville";  
[http://generalthomas.com/Schofield\\_and\\_Thomas.htm](http://generalthomas.com/Schofield_and_Thomas.htm) (Accessed November 3, 2014).

**Editor**

December 9<sup>th</sup>: Appalling weather in Nashville made all forms of fighting near impossible. Roads had been reduced to quagmires.

December 10<sup>th</sup>: Sherman's army arrived in Savannah.

December 12<sup>th</sup>: Thomas telegraphed Grant with the information that he would attack Hood as soon as the weather improved.

December 13<sup>th</sup>: In a further blow to the defenders of Savannah, Sherman's men established a route to the sea that would allow the Union Navy to supply his army. Grant appointed Major-General John Logan to replace General Thomas in Nashville.

December 15<sup>th</sup>: Once the weather had cleared Thomas ordered an attack on Hood's army at Nashville. The only thing that saved Hood was the shortened day. Other than failing to finish off Hood's army, the attack was an overwhelming success with 1,000 men taken prisoner.

December 16<sup>th</sup>: Thomas conveys the news to Grant. He followed up the attack with a further massive attack using all the men at his command – 50,000. Hood could only muster 30,000 men. The Army of the Tennessee put up a good defence but defeat was almost inevitable. 4,500 Confederate troops surrendered, 1,500 men were either killed or wounded. 59 out of 156 artillery guns were captured. Hood could only order a retreat for those who survived – a retreat that had to be executed in the dead of winter with minimal supplies.

December 17<sup>th</sup>: Hood's men started their retreat to Columbia.

December 18<sup>th</sup>: Savannah refused to surrender to Sherman.

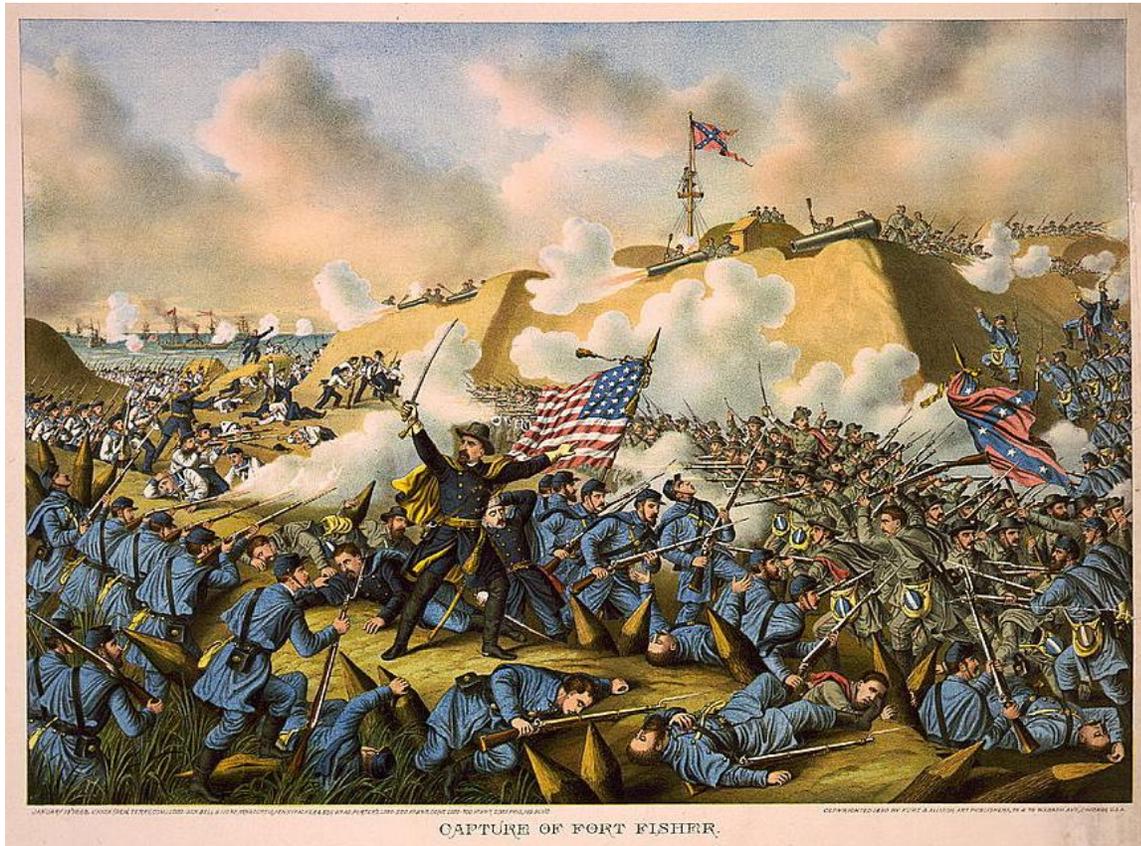
December 19<sup>th</sup>: Such was the confidence of Sherman – and his numerical advantage – that he could afford to send troops to Grant to assist in the attack on Richmond.

December 20<sup>th</sup>: The Confederate force in Savannah left the city. 10,000 men managed to withdraw from the city but they were still facing in the field an army six times larger than them. Savannah fell to Sherman. The Confederates left behind in the city 250 heavy artillery guns and 25,000 bales of cotton.

December 21<sup>st</sup>: Sherman entered Savannah.

December 22<sup>nd</sup>: Sherman telegraphed Lincoln the following: “I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah.”

December 24<sup>th</sup>: Union forces started an attack on Fort Fisher in North Carolina. This fort defended the only remaining port open to the Confederacy – Wilmington. The largest Union naval force of 60 warships gathered before the fort to blast it into submission. However, their task was not easy. The design of the fort and the inaccuracy of those bombarding the fort meant that many Union shells fired from the ships simply flew over the fort and into Cape Fear River.



December 25<sup>th</sup>: 6,000 Union troops landed to take Fort Fisher but the fort’s guns were still intact and kept them pinned down. A rumour that Confederate reinforcements were on their way, convinced the commanders on the ground that they should withdraw.

December 26<sup>th</sup>: The Union troops at Fort Fisher were evacuated. Lincoln ordered an investigation as to what went wrong and why what should have been a relatively easy victory turned into a full-scale withdrawal.

December 30<sup>th</sup>: Lincoln proposed to remove General Ben Butler from the command of the Army of the James. It was Butler who commanded the abortive landing at Fort Fisher. Grant also had a very low opinion of Butler’s ability.

December 31<sup>st</sup>: Sherman's army rested in Savannah in preparation for its advance north to support Grant.

Source: <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/December-1864-civil-war.htm>  
(Accessed November 3, 2014).

**\*\*\*\*\* November Program \*\*\*\*\***

**Could the South Have Won?**



**Dr. Melton McLaurin** presented a most thought-provoking look at the prospects of a Southern victory during its quest for independence. He systematically addressed the differences between the industrialized North and the agrarian South that existed in December 1860. Population, manufacturing capacities, railroad and other transportation systems, religious and educational institutions were among the areas of society which Dr. McLaurin covered in his spirited talk.

An outspoken Southern planter class and an equally rabid abolitionist Northern faction exerted influence beyond their actual numbers during the 1850s and early 1860s. Their influence pushed each section toward a fracture with the protections written into the Constitution that could have prevented an armed conflict.

Whether you agreed with Dr. McLaurin's views or not, his presentation laid out the depth to which slavery had embedded itself into the fabric of the United States.

**Editor**

**\*\*\*\*\* Civil War Ancestors \*\*\*\*\***



Do you know what your ancestors did during the Civil War? Previously, **Bruce Patterson** shared the story of two members of his family.

If you would like to share stories of your kinsman or kinswoman and their lives during or after the Civil War, forward a short article and I will gladly include in *The Runner* so others may learn your family's history.

**\*\*\*\*\* Civil War Ancestors 2 \*\*\*\*\***

**Arthur MacArthur Jr.** rejected an appointment to West Point and insisted that he join the Civil War effort. Judge MacArthur, a Wisconsin lawyer and jurist, arranged a commission as a first lieutenant with the 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin for his son. The seventeen year old Arthur saw action at Perryville, Stones River, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. He was a brevet Colonel at war's end and decided to remain in the army. In 1890, MacArthur received a Medal of Honor for his actions at Missionary Ridge in 1863. General MacArthur fought in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War and would become its governor general during the Filipinos resurrection.

Arthur MacArthur and his now civilian boss, William Howard Taft, had differed on the conduct of the Filipinos resurrection and the creation of a civilian government in the Philippines. MacArthur was returned to the United States where he harbored resentments toward civilian politicians and those he considered as deskbound warriors of the army general staff.

MacArthur and his son, Douglas MacArthur would become the first father-son to receive the Medal of Honor.



Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/macarthur/peopleevents/pandeAMEX107.html>  
(Accessed November 3, 2014).

**\*\*\*\*\* Trivia Questions for December \*\*\*\*\***

**1 – How long did the Petersburg Campaign last?** The Petersburg Campaign began on June 15, 1864 when Confederate troops, commanded by P.G.T. Beauregard, prevented Union troops from taking this important manufacturing and transport hub. The campaign ended on April 2, 1865, when massed Union forces, commanded by U.S. Grant, breached the Confederate defensive trenches. The **292 day campaign** was the longest in United States history.

**Source:** <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/petersburg/10-facts-about-the-petersburg.html>  
(Accessed November 23, 2014).

**2 – How many combatants were involved and how many casualties resulted from this extended Petersburg Campaign?** The armies at Petersburg were in almost constant transition, making the determination of troop strength a moving target. In general, Union troop strength exceeded that of the Confederates by nearly two-to-one for most of the campaign. Even at the end of the campaign, on April 2, 1865, Lee evacuated more than 50,000 men out of Richmond and Petersburg, while Grant’s combined armies counted at least 110,000 men by that time. Although precise figures are hard to come by, the best estimates suggest 42,000 Union casualties and 28,000 Confederate casualties, in total.

**Source:** <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/petersburg/10-facts-about-the-petersburg.html>  
(Accessed November 23, 2014).

**3 – The Battle of the Crater was one of the well known fights during the Civil War. When did this battle occur?** The 48th Pennsylvania Infantry excavated a 510-foot tunnel beneath a Confederate fort southeast of Petersburg. On July 30, 1864, they packed the galleries with 8,000 pounds of powder and ignited the fuse. The blast created a huge gap in the Confederate line, sending more than 300 South Carolinians to their graves. The attacks that followed failed to match the engineering success. Poor planning, communications, and leadership robbed the Battle of the Crater of its potentially decisive results. Bold Confederate counterattacks repaired the breach, focusing particular bitterness upon the black troops who participated in the assaults. Grant pronounced it “the saddest affair I have witnessed in this war.”

**Source:** <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/petersburg/10-facts-about-the-petersburg.html>  
(Accessed November 23, 2014).

**4 – Per Dr. Melton McLaurin’s November 13<sup>th</sup> presentation, what was the Confederacy’s “only prayer” to gain its independence?** Official recognition by the major European powers – Great Britain and France – and their monetary and military support of Confederate cause was needed to secure Southern independence. Charles Francis Adams, Lincoln’s foreign minister in London, was instrumental in thwarting efforts of Confederate diplomats to gain that official recognition.

**5 – Was King Cotton ever a serious advantage for the cause of Southerner Independence?** The initial strategy of the Confederacy was to withhold cotton from the European manufacturers. The thought that this action would create extreme chaos in the British and French economies did not materialize. At the very time the Confederacy needed every credit to purchase weapons and war materials, its own strategy began the ultimate failure of the Southern cause.

Other markets, India and Egypt, developed to replace Southern cotton.

Whether the Southern cause could ever have been successful has been debated since 1865. In a war of attrition, the South was in an extremely poor position to gain independence.

**\*\*\*\*\* Thoughts \*\*\*\*\***

**“That Wasn’t the Way it Happened”**

I remember a Civil War story that I used to hear Irvin S. Cobb tell when he was a newspaper reporter and I was a struggling lawyer in Paducah. It seemed two Confederate veterans were reminiscing about the days during the war when Paducah was being fought over by Northern and Southern forces. “I remember,” one veteran said, “when we pushed those damyankees all the way across the Ohio and up into Illinois!” The other old soldier regretfully corrected him. “I was there, old Friend,” he said, “and I’m afraid that wasn’t the way it happened at all. Those Yankees drove *us* out of Paducah and almost to the Tennessee line.” The first veteran reflected a bit, then sourly remarked, “Another good story ruined by an eyewitness!”

- Alben W. Barkley

I enjoy reading Civil War memoirs; however, I always try to keep in mind that events many years in the past can reshape a story.

What are your thoughts?

Source: Alben W. Barkley, *That Reminds Me* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954], 35.