

# *The Runner*

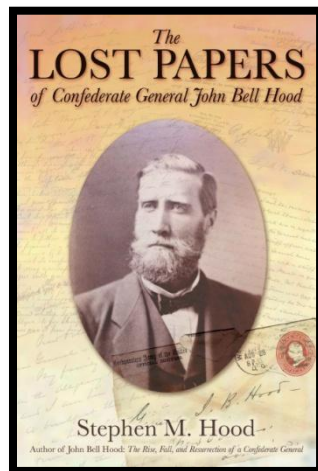


## Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Our next meeting will be held on **Thursday, 8 January** 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.

\*\*\*\*\* **January 2015 Program** \*\*\*\*\*

### **John Bell Hood's Tennessee Campaign: In His Own Words**



Historians and other writers have spent considerable ink speculating about Hood's motives, beliefs, and objectives, and the result has not always been flattering or even fully honest. Now, long-believed "lost" firsthand accounts previously unavailable offer insights into the character, personality, and military operations of John Bell Hood the general, husband, and father.

Using these previously thought lost papers, **Stephen "Sam" Hood** will explain the why, when, where, and how of John Bell Hood's Tennessee Campaign.

Stephen M. "Sam" Hood is a graduate of Kentucky Military Institute, Marshall University (Bachelor of Arts, 1976), and a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. A collateral descendent of General John Bell Hood, Sam is a retired industrial construction company owner, past member of the Board of Directors of the Blue Gray Education Society of Chatham, Virginia, and is a past president of the Board of Directors of

Confederate Memorial Hall Foundation in New Orleans. Sam resides in his hometown of Huntington, West Virginia and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina with his wife of thirty-five years, Martha, and is the proud father of two sons: Derek Hood of Lexington, Kentucky, and Taylor Hood of Barboursville, West Virginia.

**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.



*A Blaze of Glory ----- Thomas Chilcote*

*The Civil War ----- Tom Taylor*

*Confederate Minds ----- Ed Gibson*

*Bloody Angle ----- Bob Cooke*

*The Privations of a Private ----- Bill Jayne*

*Jeff Davis's Own ----- Dale Lear*

**\*\*\*\*\* January 1865 \*\*\*\*\***

The First Battle of Fort Fisher in December 1864 had ended in a debacle for the Union Army and Navy. Admiral David Dixon Porter and General Benjamin Butler had failed to coordinate their efforts against the last major blockade running port open to the Confederacy. The Union troops that had landed north of the fort had been rescued without serious challenges from Braxton Bragg's troops assembled at Sugar Loaf. Even as the dispirited Union forces returned to their bases, General Grant had begun to formulate a plan that would quickly return Union forces to the Cape Fear. General Bragg, unlike Chase Whiting and William Lamb who feared a quick Union return, ordered that the troops at Sugar Loaf be returned to Wilmington and other locations. Seldom had two generals reached such different conclusions about the same set of events. For Wilmington and Fort Fisher, Grant and Bragg would soon test whether the Union or Confederate conclusions were sound.

On January 6, 1865, a newly appointed Union general, Alfred Terry, and his Union Army transports sailed south from Hampton Roads toward Fort Fisher. Admiral Porter's fleet was delayed by rough seas; however, by 10:00 p.m. January 12, fifty-eight warships and twenty-two army transports began their rendezvous off New Inlet at Fort Fisher. Colonel William Lamb, at the Pulpit in Fort Fisher, saw an increasing number of twinkling lights as they appeared in the dark ocean off the coast. Lamb, having received no warning from headquarters in Wilmington, notified General Bragg of the Union fleet's presence. As Lamb had feared, the Union fleet and army were back.

General Robert Hoke had his entire 6,424 man division in route from Wilmington to Sugar Loaf by steamer and march by 1:00 a.m. on the 13<sup>th</sup>. Colonel Lamb had 800 artillerymen of the 36<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Regiment to defend the fort from the coming assault. The overall Confederate commander, General Bragg, had done little since the December attack to strengthen Fort Fisher with men or equipment. Bragg had failed yet once again.

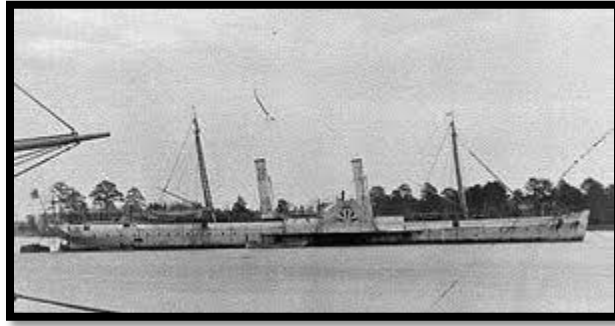
\*\*\*\*\* To be continued in the February issue of *The Runner* \*\*\*\*\*

**Editor**

**\*\*\*\*\* Trivia Questions for January \*\*\*\*\***

- 1 – Confederate General Patrick Cleburne died from wounds received during his gallant but reckless actions at the Battle of Franklin. What led to his actions?**
- 2 – How did Union General John M. Schofield's escape Hood's trap at Spring Hill, Tennessee in November 1864?**
- 3 – How many soldiers were engaged during the 292 day Petersburg Campaign?**
- 4 – Confederate Fort Mahone and Union Fort Sedgwick were located within a few hundred yards of each other along the Jerusalem Plank Road. What names did the soldiers give to these hotly contested fortifications?**

\*\*\*\*\* **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 CFCWRT welcomes new members: **John Baldwin, Warner Batson, Charles Busby, Robert Jackson, Bill Keiper, Robert Leech, Cindy Richards, Harwin & Jane Smith and Berl Wyatt.**

2 - On **January 17-18, 2015**, Fort Fisher State Historic Site will open North Carolina's official 2015 commemoration of the events that led to the end of the Civil War 150 years ago by hosting **“Nor Shall Your Glory Be Forgotten: the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Fort Fisher.”** Organizers say no other Fort Fisher program to date rivals the scope of what awaits visitors that weekend. Due to anticipated high attendance, visitors are encouraged to arrive early both days. Free public parking will be provided at the Fort Fisher Air Force Recreation Base, just north of the historic site. From there, visitors can take a short stroll to the site or board one of several free shuttles. The site will open at 9 am each day, with activities throughout the day.

At the core of the observance weekend are Saturday and Sunday recreations of the January 1865 Union attacks on Fort Fisher. The battle reenactments will feature hundreds of re-enactors representing Union and Confederate soldiers, sailors, and Marines realistically depicting everything from camp life to battle strategies. Saturday's battle reenactment begins at 1:30 pm, while Sunday's reenactment will begin at 10:30 am. The program will also feature historians, authors, speakers, cannon firings, artillery demonstrations, new exhibits, new interpretive wayside trail markers, and a long list of VIPs and special guests, including renowned historian and battlefield guide **Ed Bearss**, who will serve as keynote speaker at the opening ceremony planned for 11 am Saturday.

3 – The **CFCWRT traditional dinner meeting** will be on Thursday, **12 February, 2015**, in the Madeline Suite, UNCW. Tickets are priced at \$26 each and will be available at our January meeting or by mailing your check to the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, PO Box 15750, Wilmington, NC 28408. We are most fortunate in having our own **Dr. Chris Fonvielle** as our speaker. Chris will discuss his newest book which addresses the Civil War in Eastern North Carolina *other than the Wilmington Campaign*.

4 – Brunswick Civil War Round Table – Speaker: **Ed Bearss** Topic: The Western and Eastern Theaters. January 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 – 7:00pm at Hatch Auditorium on the grounds of the North Carolina Baptist Assembly on Caswell Beach.

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

**\*\*\*\*\* January 1865 \*\*\*\*\***

By January 1865 many in the South knew that the war was lost, despite the upbeat stance of Jefferson Davis. The only thing in the South's favour in January was the weather that continued to hinder the North.

January 3<sup>rd</sup>: Sherman readied his men to continue their advance north to challenge Lee.

January 4<sup>th</sup>: Union troops started their second assault on Fort Fisher; 8,000 men were involved.

January 5<sup>th</sup>: Both General Lee and Jefferson Davis continued to be upbeat about the South's military situation. Many others in the Confederacy were a lot more pessimistic about the South's chances. Lincoln gave James W Singleton a Presidential pass to get through Union lines to help facilitate a surrender.

January 6<sup>th</sup>: Davis sent a letter to the Confederacy's Vice-President, Alexander H Stephens, asking for an explanation regarding Stephens alleged association with Georgia's peace movement.

January 9<sup>th</sup>: The Constitutional Convention of Tennessee voted to abolish slavery in the state.

January 11<sup>th</sup>: The Constitutional Convention of Missouri voted to abolish slavery in the state.

A party of 300 Confederate cavalry riding in very poor weather launched a surprise attack on Union positions in Beverley, West Virginia, and captured 600 Union troops.

January 12<sup>th</sup>: Jefferson Davis wrote in a letter to Lincoln that he willing to discuss an end to hostilities but only on the proviso that the South remained independent.

January 13<sup>th</sup>: The North started a major attack on Fort Fisher. The fort was all that protected the port of Wilmington – the only port that the South still had open that could trade with Europe. Troops were landed by the fort and the Union's navy bombarded it from the sea.

January 14<sup>th</sup>: Union ships continued a non-stop bombardment of the fort, which received heavy damage. Guns in the fort had to be trained on both the approaching infantry on land and the ships out at sea. But all of the guns could not be concentrated on one target alone.

January 15<sup>th</sup>: Fort Fisher fell to Union forces. The North lost a total of 1,341 men in the attack (226 killed, 1018 wounded and 57 missing). The South lost 500 men killed and wounded with over 2,000 taken prisoner. Wilmington was no longer able to operate as an overseas port and the South was effectively cut off with regards to external trade.

January 16<sup>th</sup>: Lincoln was made aware that Davis was willing to discuss peace based around the South's independence. He immediately dismissed the idea.

The Confederate Senate appointed General Lee as commander of all the armies of the Confederacy.

January 17<sup>th</sup>: While in Savannah, Sherman issued Field Order Number 15. As his successful army advanced in the South, it attracted many former slaves who followed it in the vanguard. Sherman's order handed to them confiscated or abandoned land along the Georgia coast – a maximum of 40 acres per person. This move ensured that those former slaves who were near Sherman's army were more than willing to help and support it. As the news of what Sherman had done spread, so did the hopes of former slaves still in the South.

January 19<sup>th</sup>: General Lee reluctantly accepted the title of commander-in-chief of the South's Armies. Lee was undoubtedly a highly skilled general but he would have been aware that even a man of his abilities would not have the skill to stop the inevitable – a victory for the North. However a sense of duty compelled him to accept the promotion even if it was a poisoned chalice.

January 20<sup>th</sup>: Sherman's army headed towards South Carolina. However, its advance was severely hampered by heavy rain that made roads all but unusable.

January 21<sup>st</sup>: Sherman's army marched into South Carolina but faced no opposition from Confederate forces.

January 23<sup>rd</sup>: The South lost its ironclads 'Virginia' and 'Richmond'. 'Richmond' ran aground on the James River while 'Virginia' was badly damaged by Union artillery in Fort Parsons.

January 24<sup>th</sup>: Grant agreed to an exchange of prisoners. He did not believe that it would make any difference to the campaign as he felt that the exchanged Southern prisoners would be less than keen to fight and the South was still experiencing major problems with desertion.

January 25<sup>th</sup>: Sherman continued his advance through South Carolina. All his men faced were skirmishes with Confederate troops. There appeared to be no sustained military attempt to stop his advance – or there was a realisation that any attempt was doomed to failure.

January 27<sup>th</sup>: Lee complained to the Confederate government in Richmond that his men were surviving on pitiable rations and that the major cause of desertion was the poor rations. On the same day he sent a letter to the Governor of South Carolina that "the



Confederacy was safe” as long as the civilian population continued to give its support to the troops.

January 28<sup>th</sup>: Davis appointed senior Confederate politicians to hold informal talks with the North – Vice-President Stephens, President of the Senate, R Turner and former US Supreme Court judge John Campbell.

Source: <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/December -1864-civil-war.htm>  
(Accessed November 26, 2014).

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



US Park Service Ranger, **Emmanuel Dabney**, provided a detailed talk about the conditions the Union and Confederate soldiers faced on a daily basis during the long Petersburg campaign. Emmanuel discussed the fortifications, the artillery, the sharpshooters, the rations, medical care, relief efforts for the soldiers, religious services, and morale in the trenches. His description of the conditions that the US Colored troops faced was especially enlightening – from their actions to gain equal pay for their services to their combat at the Crater, theirs was a story of challenges from their own command as well as hostility from the Confederate troops.

**Editor**

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

**1 – Confederate General Patrick Cleburne died from wounds received during his gallant but reckless actions at the Battle of Franklin. What led to his actions?** See answer to question 2.

**2 – How did Union General John M. Schofield’s escape Hood’s trap at Spring Hill, Tennessee in November 1864?** Join us at the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting where Sam Hood will provide the answers to these questions and several others.

The lost papers of John Bell Hood offer more than 200 documents. While each document is a valuable piece of history, some shed important light on some of the war’s lingering mysteries and controversies. For example, several letters from multiple Confederate officers may finally explain the Confederate failure to capture or destroy Schofield’s Union army at Spring Hill, Tennessee, on the night of November 29, 1864. Another letter by Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Lee goes a long way toward explaining

Confederate Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's gallant but reckless conduct that resulted in his death at Franklin. Lee also lodges serious allegations against Confederate Maj. Gen. William Bate. While these and others offer a military perspective of Hood the general, the revealing letters between he and his beloved and devoted wife, Anna, help us better understand Hood the man and husband.

**3 – How many soldiers were engaged during the 292 day Petersburg Campaign?** Per Emmanuel Dabney's presentation, greater than 200,000 Union and Confederate troops were engaged in this long and difficult campaign. Dabney characterized the actions at Petersburg from the words left by one of the participants, "Dig, dig, dig. Boom, boom, boom."

**4 – Confederate Fort Mahone and Union Fort Sedgwick were located within a few hundred yards of each other along the Jerusalem Plank Road. What names did the soldiers give to these hotly contested fortifications?** Fort Mahone was "Fort Damnation" and Fort Sedgwick was "Fort Hell." The forts were so close together that each drew heavy artillery and rifle fire from July 1864 until April 1865.

The sites, especially Fort Sedgwick, were well preserved until bulldozed to make place for a shopping center in 1967.

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

I have no deep and thought provoking comments for January 2015. I only desire to wish each and every one of you a happy and prosperous new year filled with good health, friends, and worthwhile Civil War studies.

**Editor**