



# THE RUNNER



DECEMBER 2019

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 11



*Lori Sanderlin - Finding Post-War Confederate Sailor, Captain H. S. Lebby, Blockade Runner and Privateer*



The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table invites you to a presentation on the mystery of Henry Sterling Lebby, a South Carolinian hailed by no less an authority than James Sprunt as one of those “celebrated men of nerve and experience” who captained blockade runners in the last year of the Civil War.

The ships they captained, like Lebby’s *Little Hattie*, were expressly built to run the increasingly tight Federal blockade. *Little Hattie* was built in Scotland and ran the blockade at least four times, once to Charleston, S.C., and three times at Wilmington. In fact, *Little Hattie* made her last run into Wilmington on December 23, 1864, just ahead of the *USS Louisiana*, the frivolous “powder ship” that was supposed to destroy Ft. Fisher by means of an off-shore explosion. The only effect of the blast was to wake the garrison of the fort in the middle of the night.

Born on James Island, Charleston, S.C., in 1829, Captain Lebby had a “celebrated” career as a Confederate sea captain but ended up at Sailors’ Snug Harbor (SSH) in Staten Island, N.Y., in his last years. The wealthy

*(Continued on page 2)*

*Janet Croon: The War Outside My Window, Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham, 1860-1865*

Jan Croon, editor of *The War Outside My Window*, presented a riveting account of the Civil War home front through the eyes of a unique and affecting observer. The book is subtitled “The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham, 1860-65” and it’s billed as “A remarkable account of the collapse of the Old South and the final years of a privileged, but afflicted life.” It’s all that and much more.

Bruce Patterson, our Round Table’s secretary, treasurer and *éminence grise*, put it well. In an email to Ms. Croon, he wrote: “Meeting LeRoy last evening was an unexpected pleasure. I had expected another Civil War tale, as seen from the window of a Macon homestead. Instead, I was introduced to a young, afflicted, Southern teen-aged boy with gifts far beyond his physical limitations. In short, your presentation and the tale you wove was a testament to youthful ambition, Southern education, perseverance and the Christian faith LeRoy displayed until his passing. Your obvious love of this young man was infectious.”

*(Continued on page 3)*

## NEXT PRESENTATION

- ◆ Thursday, Dec. 12th
- ◆ **Lori Sanderlin - Southport Maritime Museum Manager**
- ◆ 6:30 Social 7:00 Meeting
- ◆ Cape Fear Museum  
814 Market Street  
Williston Auditorium -  
Second Floor



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## *Lori Sanderlin - Finding Post-War Confederate Sailor, Captain H. S. Lebby, Blockade Runner and Privateer , cont.*

New York City family of Revolutionary War patriot Captain Robert Richard Randall dedicated the proceeds of the sale of Randall Manor, several acres of land in lower Manhattan, to endow the home for “worn out and decrepit sailors” on Staten Island.

So, how did the celebrated blockade running captain end up in a home for “worn out and decrepit sailors” in New York City? His application for residence at the home described him as a widower and a merchant sailor.

Lori Sanderlin, Manager of the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Southport, will unravel this fascinating mystery for us. Ms. Sanderlin is a native of Wilmington and a graduate of UNCW. She earned a masters in Maritime Studies from State University of New York Maritime College located in Bronx, N.Y. While conducting research from the admissions logs at Sailors’ Snug Harbor, New York, she found the name of Henry Sterling Lebby. Not only was Lebby not just a “merchant sailor,” he was married to Susan Anne Witter, also of James Island, S.C.

The presentation takes place at the Cape Fear Museum at 814 Market Street on Thursday evening, December 12. We begin at 6:30 p.m. with a chance to mingle and then the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.



Aged sailors at the Sailors’ Snug Harbor on Staten Island, N.Y., late 1800s. Residents were known as “snugs.”



Aerial rendering of Sailors’ Snug Harbor on Staten Island, NY. The campus is now on the National Register of Historic Places and houses the maritime museum and other cultural venues.

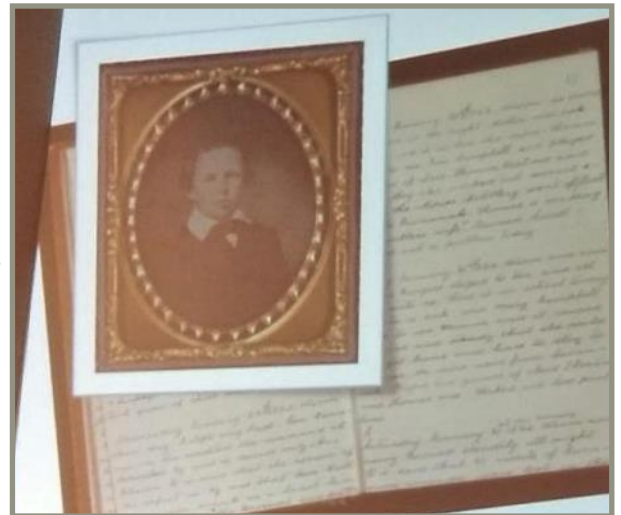


*Janet Croon: The War Outside My Window,  
Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham, 1860-1865, cont.*

We heard LeRoy's story of how a teenaged boy afflicted with a harrowing, painful and incurable illness, read and learned everything he could about the war from an imposing mansion in Macon, Georgia, where young Confederate officers, Union prisoners, notable cultural leaders young friends, aged family members and slaves come and go with news and acute observations. By January 1864 LeRoy had become such an astute observer that he noted "I think the Yankees have, in Wilmington, struck the weakest and one of the most important points in the Country and if they are as pertinacious as they were at Charleston, they will take it." The news that the Union was mounting an attack on Wilmington was false, but LeRoy's observations were very accurate.

And we also learned much about how such a book is made. LeRoy's seven diaries had been safely, but obscurely, stored at the Library of Congress (LOC). A show at the Library featured the diaries and a *Washington Post* story about the show lit the fuse of Jan Croon's interest.

A gifted investigator and genealogical authority, Ms. Croon convinced Civil War publisher Ted Savas that there was a great story in young LeRoy's diaries. She went to work and not only prepared the diaries for publication but filled in the gaps, made the connections, clarified the many references to family members and generally made the book a fascinating wartime artifact but also a three-dimensional portrait of a remarkable person.





*Running the Blockade - Little Hattie's Last Trip to Charleston*

Running the blockade. [from the Richmond times Feb. 21, 1897.] Daring Exploits at Charleston in war times. Some lucky vessels that made their way through the Federal Fleets repeatedly without Detection.

The steamer *Little Hattie*, Captain H. S. Leppy, was the last runner in or out of Charleston. She was a small vessel, Clyde built, furnished with powerful engines, and she made more trips than any other vessel engaged in the business.

On several occasions she brought such munitions of war which the Confederacy was in pressing need of, and at least three battles were fought with munitions for which the Confederates had waited, and which she landed safely in their hands.

Plot after plot was formed at Nassau to get hold of the *Hattie*, but none of them were successful. She slipped in and out like a phantom, taking the most desperate risks, and being attended by quite extraordinary good luck.

The last entrance of the *Hattie* into Charleston occurred one night in February, 1865. The Confederacy was then in extremis, and the Federal fleet off Charleston, numbered eighteen or twenty sail.

It was a starlight night, and at an early hour, the *Hattie* crept forward among the fleet. She had been freshly painted a blue-white, her fire made no smoke, and not a light was permitted to shine on board. With her engines moving slowly, she let the wind drive her forward. There were eight or ten vessels outside the bar, and as many within. Those outside were successfully passed without an alarm being raised. The *Hattie* ran within 300 feet of two different blockaders without her presence being detected. To the naked eye of the lookouts she must have seemed a hazy mist moving slowly along.

The little steamer was quietly approaching the inner line of blockaders, when a sudden fire was opened on her from a gunboat not 200 feet distant, and the air at the same time was filled with rockets to announce the runner's presence.

At that time the Federals had the whole of Morris Island, and Fort Sumter had been so battered to pieces that monitors took up their stations almost in pistol shot of it.

As soon as the *Hattie* was discovered, all steam was put on and she was headed straight for the channel. She ran a terrible gauntlet of shot and shell for ten minutes, but escaped untouched.

Then came the real peril. Just below Sumter, in the narrowest part of the channel, the *Hattie* encountered two barge-loads of men stationed there on picket.

Her extraordinary speed saved her from being boarded, but the volleys fired after her wounded two or three men and cut three fingers off the hand of the pilot holding the spokes of the wheel.

Two hundred yards ahead lay a monitor, and she at once opened fire and kept her guns going as long as the *Hattie* could be seen, but not a missile struck, and she arrived safely at her wharf.

This was marvelous, considering that the steamer ran so close that she could hear the orders given on the monitor.

Charleston was being bombarded, many of the business houses closed, and all could see that the end was drawing near. The *Hattie* was in as much danger lying at the wharf, as she would

(Continued on page 5)



## *Running the Blockade - Little Hattie's Last Trip to Charleston, cont.*

be outside, and a cargo was made up for her as quickly as possible, and she was made ready for her last trip.

Just before dark the sentinels on Fort Sumter counted twenty-six Federal blockaders off Charleston harbor, and yet the *Hattie* coolly made her preparations to run out. Just before midnight, with a starlight night and smooth sea, the lucky little craft picked her way through all that fleet without being hailed or a gun fired, and she was lying at Nassau when the news of Lee's surrender was received.

Excerpts from [\*Southern Historical Society Papers, Volume 24\*](#)  
By Reverend J. William Jones, Ed.

## *Running the Blockade - One of the Last Trips to Wilmington*

“*Little Hattie* was built by James and George Thomson on the Clyde, she was a schooner-rigged iron paddle steamer. She was launched in March 1864, and purchased by the Importing & Exporting Company of Georgia. *Little Hattie* sailed under three masters, Capt. Jessé De Horsey, Capt. Collier, and Capt. H. S. Leiby, CSN. In all she ran the blockade some ten times, into Wilmington and Charleston. Consul Allen at Bermuda refers to her as being chased on one occasion. She was in Bermuda on 19th July 1864, when Consul Allen believed that she was involved in some scheme to release Confederate prisoners from captivity. This plan did not come to fruition. She was once more at Bermuda in late October, but left for Wilmington on the 25th. Mary F. Sanders, in a talk to the Ladies Memorial Association of Wilmington, spoke of watching her arrival:

*I sprang to my feet, caught up the powerful field glasses...stepped out on the roof of the porch facing the ocean and looked. Sure enough it was the Little Hattie, and to my horror, I saw a figure on the paddle-box, whom I knew to be Dan [Daniel Stevenson, the signal officer] with flag in hand signaling to the Fort....Onward dashed the frail little craft with eight United States steamers following close in her wake, pouring a relentless iron hail after her. When she came near the Fort, the thirteen ships stationed off the mouth of Cape Fear joined in the fray, but He who marks the sparrow's fall, covered her with His hand, and not one of the death-bearing messengers touched the little boat.....For nearly an hour I stood on the roof watching the exciting race, and when the Little Hattie came near enough to discern features, I recognized Captain Leiby with his trumpet, Lt. Clancey with his spyglass, and Dan, still standing on the paddle box with his flag, having served its purpose, resting idly in his hand; and thus, at 10 o'clock that cloudless October morning was accomplished one of the only two successful trips of a blockade-runner made by daylight.*

By early 1865, now very well known to the federal authorities, the *Hattie* transferred her base to Havana, where she saw out the war.”

Excerpt from [\*British Blockade Runners in the American Civil War\*](#)  
By Joseph McKenna

## *Member News*

### **CFCWRT Upcoming Events**

- January 9, 2020**      *Beckey Sawyer:* The Letters of Sidney Stockbridge, aboard the USS Pawtuxet, James River, April 1865
- February 13th**      *Bert Dunkerly:* The Richmond Bread Riots

### **November Raffle Winners**



- A Shower of Stars - Harry Clements**  
**Gettysburg - Gail Clements** (holding one of John Bolger's books)  
**The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan - John Bolger**  
**Battle of Bull Run - John Bolger**  
**Blue & Gray - Bill Jayne**  
**Mathew Brady's Illustrated History of the Civil War - Bob Cooke**  
**American Battlefield Trust 2020 Calendar - Joe George**  
**Before Antietam - Ed Gibson**

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.

### **Wreaths Across America**

**December 14** - Wreaths Across America, Wilmington National Cemetery, Ceremony and Wreath laying will be held, at the Cemetery (2500 block, Market Street) at noon.

We, the CFCWRT, played a significant role in raising funds to cover the graves in our National Cemetery (with some extras donated to Oakdale). The ceremony and wreath laying is impressive. Attend if able and your schedule permits.

*(continued on page 7)*

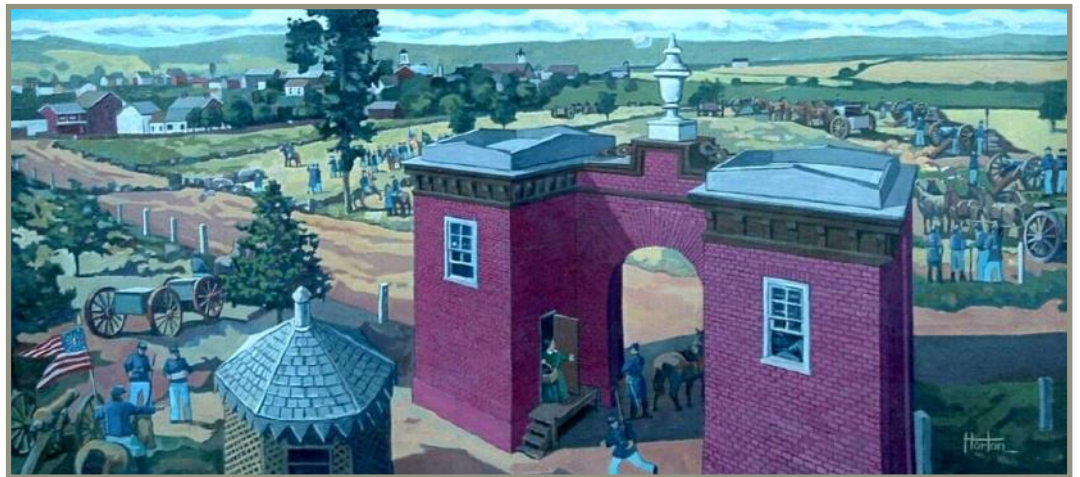
## Member News, cont.

### *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.



Gate at Cemetery Hill in Gettysburg

By Jim Horton

### Civil War Ironclads

Ironclads, or wooden warships protected from gunfire, were nontraditional, in that they incorporated technical advances that were not wholly acceptable to traditional naval architects, particularly when they did not accept traditional hull design and armament. Both the French and English Navy utilized an ironclad design as early as the mid-1850's but the concept was not acceptable on these shores until the Civil War.

Interestingly enough, the first Ironclads used in the Civil War were not US Naval vessels, but rather were US Army Ironclads for use in the western river campaigns. It was Army Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs, who on 2 July 1861, first authorized their purchase while the Navy did not deploy an ironclad until March, 1862, when the first Monitor (a Swedish design concept, built in New York) engaged the CSS Virginia at Hampton Roads, VA.

Needless to say, the Ironclads quickly became acceptable, but that is another story.

USS Mound City





*Sugar Loaf Line Historical Park*

Our past president Chris Fonvielle has been leading the charge for the establishment of the J. Ryder Lewis Civil War Park in Carolina Beach. The site is about 3.5 acres on the east side of Route 421, Lake Park Blvd., between the highway and the harbor area, near the Publix market. The site preserves Civil War earthworks that were part of the Sugar Loaf line established around the fall of Ft. Fisher.

There was fighting along the line manned by Hoke’s Confederates and the Union decided to outflank the position by advancing on the other side of the river. We have been contacted by a group called the Sugar Loaf Earthworks Preservation Group—closely allied with the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society—and asked to fund one of the interpretative panels that will be installed in the new park. We have agreed to do that.

**Prof. Chris Fonvielle explains the background of the “Sugar Loaf Line”:** *As Union forces prepared to attack Wilmington by way of Fort Fisher in the autumn of 1864, Major General W.H.C. Whiting, commander of the District of the Cape Fear, expanded existing defenses to meet the threat. He selected in part a “strong position” stretching from the sound (modern Carolina Beach canal) to Sugar Loaf hill on the Cape Fear River, for an extensive line of earthworks. Sugar Loaf itself was a natural sand dune that stood 50 feet in height on the riverbank. Whiting planned to place a battery of artillery on the summit of the hill.*

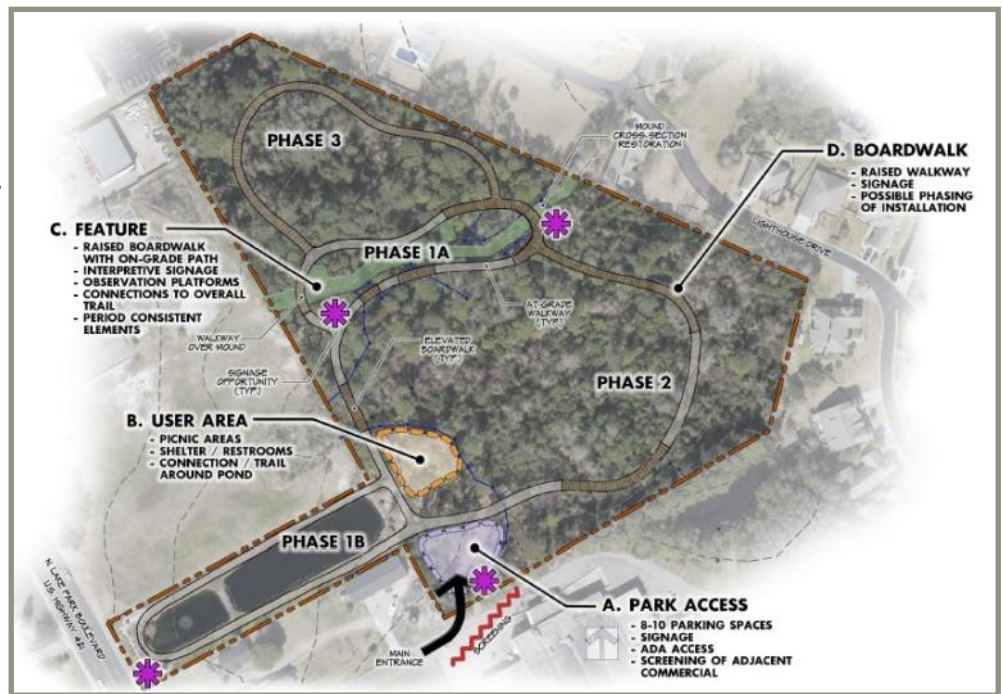
*Acting on General Whiting's orders, Colonel William Lamb, commandant at Fort Fisher, began constructing an “entrenched camp” at Sugar Loaf “so as to keep up communication after the arrival of the enemy, between the fort” and Sugar Loaf. The work probably commenced in early October 1864. On October 28, 1864, Whiting turned over the project to Captain Francis T. Hawks of Company A, 2nd Confederate States Engineers.*

*By December 1864, the earthen fieldworks of the Sugar Loaf lines ran for more than one mile from the sound to the river. Confederate forces continually strengthened them in the winter of 1864-1865.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Much of the earthworks that comprised the Sugar Loaf defenses are in a remarkable state of preservation, despite the fact that they were made almost entirely of sand. However, they are also difficult to access because of their remote location inside Carolina Beach State Park or because they are on private property. The Joseph Ryder Lewis Jr. Civil War Park will both remedy public inaccessibility to a section of the Sugar Loaf defenses and promote heritage tourism on Pleasure Island.*

The interpretative panel we are funding will include our logo and give due credit to the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table. These panels are to be much like those at Ft. Fisher. Please consider making a donation to the round table to help offset the cost of this project. Thanks.





## Trivia Questions

1. Who was the only man who fought for the confederacy, was captured and released to join the union army, and then transferred to serve as a sailor on the USS Minnesota?
2. I was born on April 14, 1822, in Guyandotte, Virginia (now West Virginia). I graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1842. I accepted a commission as an ordnance officer. I fought in the Mexican war supporting Scott's siege train and fought with distinction in the Battle of Cerro Gordo and the siege of Puebla, Mexico. After the war, I worked at numerous sites as an ordnance officer. I was commissioned to write a new ordnance manual. It was 600 pages and it was the essential guide to ordnance officers in the Civil War. I hold eight patents including one for a rifle with an innovative rolling breech-block. I was voted into the ordnance hall of fame in 2008.

One of my more obscure accomplishments can be found today just off modern day Route 30 just west of Gettysburg. While I don't believe in lucky numbers, number 233 brought me ordnance fame at Gettysburg.

Who am I and what is my tie to an alleged Battle of Gettysburg fact?

3. The three Confederate Navy vessels Charleston, Fredericksburg and Georgia were purchased with funds raised by which organization and by what nickname were these ships often referred to?

Answers on Page 9

## Books

### *Civil War Library Liquidation Sale - Central New Jersey CWRT*

Regrettably it has become necessary to close our Civil War Library & Research Center, located at 94 Green Street, Woodbridge, New Jersey. For over 20 years it has served the Civil War community and the members of our Civil War Round Table as a wonderful source of research and reading. Unfortunately the cost of maintaining it, along with a drop in use by the membership and public, has led to the decision to close it. All of the 2000+ books in the collection are available for purchase. Hardcover books can be purchased at \$3 per book, or 4 hardcover books for \$10. Paperback books can be purchased for \$1 per book. There is no limit to the amount of books a person can purchase.



The Library will be open on Saturdays, beginning November 9, 2019, from 10am-2pm for people to stop by and make your purchases. If Saturday does not work, arrangements can be made for the Library to be opened at a more convenient time by calling any of the following to set up a time:

Mike (732) 738-8411  
Tom (908) 486-2554  
Jay (732) 396-4320

**NOTE:** This information is being shared as a courtesy. It is unknown if they are willing to ship books. Please call any of the numbers above for further information if you are interested in purchasing.

*Trivia Answers*

1. Henry Morton Stanley emigrated to the United States in 1859 at age 18. Stanley reluctantly joined in the American Civil War, first enrolling in the Confederate States Army's 6th Arkansas Infantry Regiment and fighting in the Battle of Shiloh in 1862. After being taken prisoner at Shiloh, he was recruited at Camp Douglas, Illinois, by its commander Colonel James A. Mulligan as a "Galvanized Yankee." He joined the Union Army on 4 June 1862 but was discharged 18 days later because of severe illness. After recovering, he served on several merchant ships before joining the US Navy in July 1864. He became a record keeper on board the USS Minnesota, which led him into freelance journalism. Stanley and a junior colleague jumped ship on 10 February 1865 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in search of greater adventures. Stanley was possibly the only man to serve in the Confederate Army, the Union Army, and the Union Navy. (This is the same Henry Morton Stanley of "Dr. Livingston, I presume" fame!)
2. Theodore Thadeaus Sobibski Laidley  
3-inch Ordnance Rifle, Model of 1861, No. 233 , one of four 3-inch ordinance guns displayed at the four corners of the pedestal of the Buford statue along Route 30. Laidley's initials are on the gun as Army Inspector
3. Ladies Gunboat Association and Ladies Gunboats (aka Petticoat Gunboats).  
While the Confederacy was at a distinct disadvantage when it came to producing all things military, one thing it had in abundance was enthusiasm for the new ironclad ships. Among the most zealous disciples of this mania for ironclads were the women. All across the Confederacy patriotic ladies formed associations with names like Ladies Gunboat Funds, Ladies Gunboat Associations, and Ladies Defense Associations.

The first of these appeared in New Orleans in late 1861, then spread to Mobile, Charleston, and elsewhere. By the summer of 1862, they were scattered all across the south. On March 1, 1862, the Charleston Daily Courier printed a letter from a woman in Summerville, SC, suggesting that the paper open a list of contributions and enclosed a dollar. The paper endorsed the proposal and within a week more than a \$1,000 was donated. On March 14th, the Columbus Enquirer reported, we see in the Charleston papers a young lady has started a subscription to build a gunboat at Charleston. We propose that her example should be followed in Georgia. On March 17th, the Richmond Dispatch appealed for funds to build a gunboat in Virginia and mentioned the ladies in South Carolina and Georgia who were already raising funds. Newspapers throughout the south began printing lists of contributors and the amounts various organizations had collected. Soon rivalries developed among the communities. The Sandersville Central Georgian declared in an article, "The ladies of Savannah have collected \$3,600.00, what will the ladies of Washington County do?"

The ladies engaged in a variety of activities to raise money. They would solicit jewelry, chi-



Henry Morton Stanley



Theodore T.S. Laidley

(Continued on page 11)



## Trivia Answers, cont.



CSS Charleston



CSS Fredericksburg



CSS Georgia

na sets, silverware, watches, vases, musical boxes, and books to be raffled off. They had Gunboat Fairs to raise funds. Mrs. Mary Chestnut of Charleston wrote in her famous diary that she gave the girls a string of pearls to be raffled off at the Gunboat Fair. On April 14, 1862, she wrote, Our Fair is in full blast. We keep a restaurant. On the 15th she wrote \$2,000 was made at the Fair.

The total amount raised may never be known but it had to be a considerable sum. The Charleston gunboat fund raised \$30,000. The Ladies Defense Association in Richmond raised nearly that amount. Three ironclads, the Charleston, the Fredericksburg, and Georgia were called Ladies Gunboats or as one critic derisively called them “petticoat gunboats”.

## 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.

### 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.



### Excerpt from Lee by Clifford Downey

“He reverted to his simple jokes in camp and to his familiar turn of humor when he revealed to Senator Hill that he was not insensitive to the newspaper criticism.

“We made a great mistake in the beginning of our struggle,” Lee said in apparent seriousness to Hill, “and I fear, in spite of all we can do, it will prove to be a fatal mistake. We appointed all our worst generals to command our armies and all our best generals to edit newspapers.” Then he explained that he made campaign plans that seemed perfect, but the actual battles developed defects, and , he said “I occasionally wondered why I did not see some of the defects in advance. When it was all over I found by reading a newspaper that these best editor-generals saw all the defects plainly from the start. Unfortunately, they did not communicate their knowledge to me until it was too late.”



## Links

### [Gettysburg Address](#)

It's been 156 years since President Lincoln delivered one of the most famous speeches in history. In case you haven't already taken a moment to remember this speech, here is a recorded version.

### [Glossary of Civil War Terms](#)

Improve your Civil War vocabulary with our collection of relevant words & definitions.

### [Civil War Battle Maps](#)

View the principal battles and their location on the map. Clicking on a battle in the map or the list provides more detail on the battles that occurred in that State or Territory.

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## CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO Box 15750

Wilmington, NC 28408

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# 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](#)