



THE RUNNER



NOVEMBER 2021

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 10



Nov. Presentation: Betty Vaughn, Christmas in the Civil War

Betty Vaughn, an artist, teacher and writer of historical fiction, will narrate 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 explains the differences in celebration between those in the North and the South and the underlying causes for the disparity between them. While in the north it tended to be a quiet religious celebration, the South followed more liberal English customs. The Dutch in New York were responsible for several of our traditions. The original Dutch customs will be 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 discusses 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 will be traced to their origin with an explanation of why and how they changed. The use of period photos and imagery are enhanced with automation and music where appropriate. It is particularly noteworthy that many songs and customs date to this period in history.



Betty Vaughn is well known for her novels, especially those belonging to the genre of historical fiction. She has received numerous awards from the NC Society of Historians for the following historical novels set in the Civil War Period: **The Man in the Chimney**, **Turbulent Waters**, **The Intrepid Miss LaRoque**, and **Run, Cissy, Run**. Each of these books feature actual people living in the area at the time and factual events, fictionalizing only the main characters.

The Mystery of Sarah Slater, a biography, explores the mysterious courier who lived in North Carolina during the war and disappeared while carrying messages and gold to the Confederate outpost in Montreal just after the fall of Richmond. This book was also an award winner due to the extensive research presented. She was sought by investigators who wanted to question her in connection to the Lincoln assassination, but they could not find her.

Mrs. Vaughn received awards for writing while in school and afterwards. Graduating from East Carolina University, the prize-winning watercolorist pursued a career in teaching AP art history and painting. Later she took up writing full time. Her first novel, a contemporary fiction, is **Yesterday's Magnolia**.

November Meeting
Thursday, Nov 11, 2021

Presenter:
Betty Vaughn,
Christmas in the Civil War

6:30 Social 7:00 Meeting

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



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Union Blockade by Robert M. Browning, Jr.

Robert M. Browning, Jr., Ph.D., retired chief historian of the U.S. Coast Guard informed and entertained our round table on Thursday evening, October 14, with a great presentation on the Union blockade with special focus on the blockade of Wilmington and the special difficulties the Navy faced.

With two entrances into the Cape Fear River, and a large, dangerous shelf of shoals in between, the Navy had to develop a large enough squadron, an efficient supply depot and doctrine that would allow them to intercept the fast, purpose-built blockade running steamers that exported cotton and imported munitions and other scarce items for the beleaguered Confederacy.

Frying Pan Shoals forced the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron to, in effect, maintain two blockades; one off the mouth of the river and the other at New Inlet. Now closed off, New Inlet just below Fort Fisher was a very difficult nut for the Navy to crack.

Acting Rear Admiral Samuel P. Lee, a Virginian and distant cousin of Robert E. Lee, took over in September 1862 and developed different tactics to try to intercept blockade runners entering the river. He used smaller, faster ships, such as steam tugs, to patrol closer to the bars at the entrance to the inlets and called them “bartenders,” sometimes keeping them within a mile and a half of the beach. Other lines of ships patrolled further out.

Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter replaced Lee in October 1864 and was given many more ships to enforce the blockade. His tactical disposition amounted to three half-circles with the most distant line about 130 miles from the beach and stretching from Beaufort in the north to a point south of the mouth of the Cape Fear River. See maps on the next page.

The duty was boring, frustrating and sometimes humiliating because the blockade runners had all the advantages of initiative. They could choose the time and the place to enter or exit the river and make their run to or from Bermuda or to or from Nassau, Bahamas.

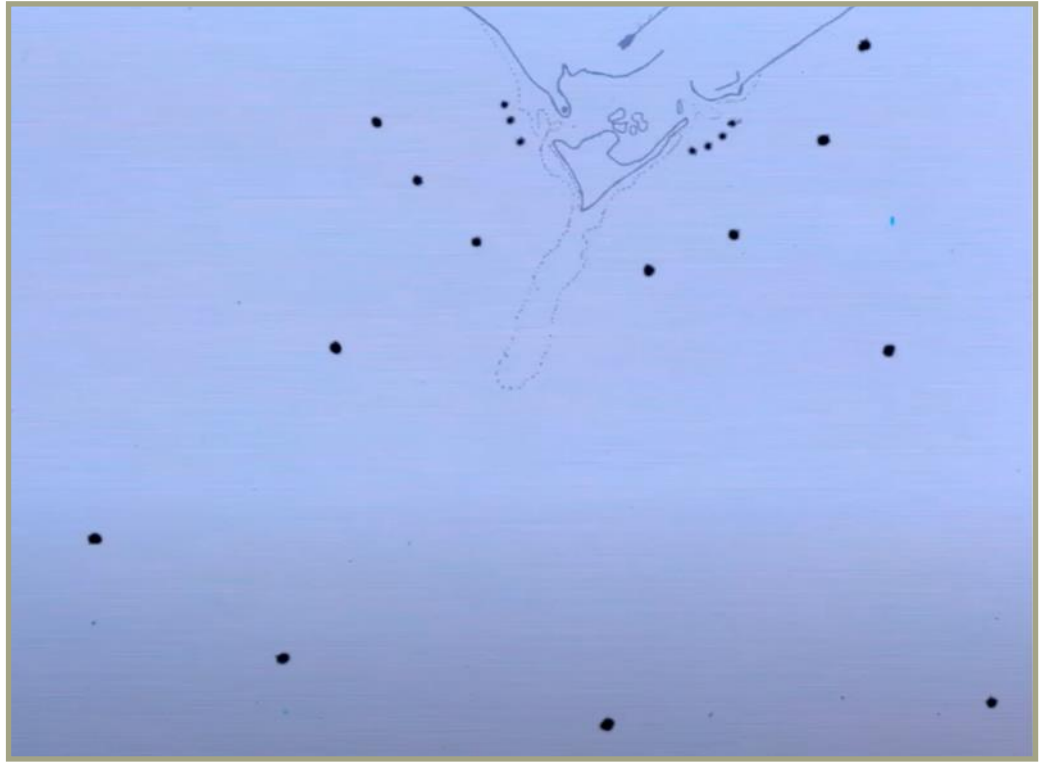
Blockade running remained potentially very profitable even as the Union Navy became more effective at stopping the trade. Eventually, many of the most effective blockading ships were blockade runners that had been captured. In those days ships and cargos captured by the Navy greatly enriched the officers and men of the fleet with prize money.

An audience of about 25 live and 12 virtual viewers contributed to a very lively question-and-answer session after the presentation and all thanked Dr. Browning for his excellent presentation.

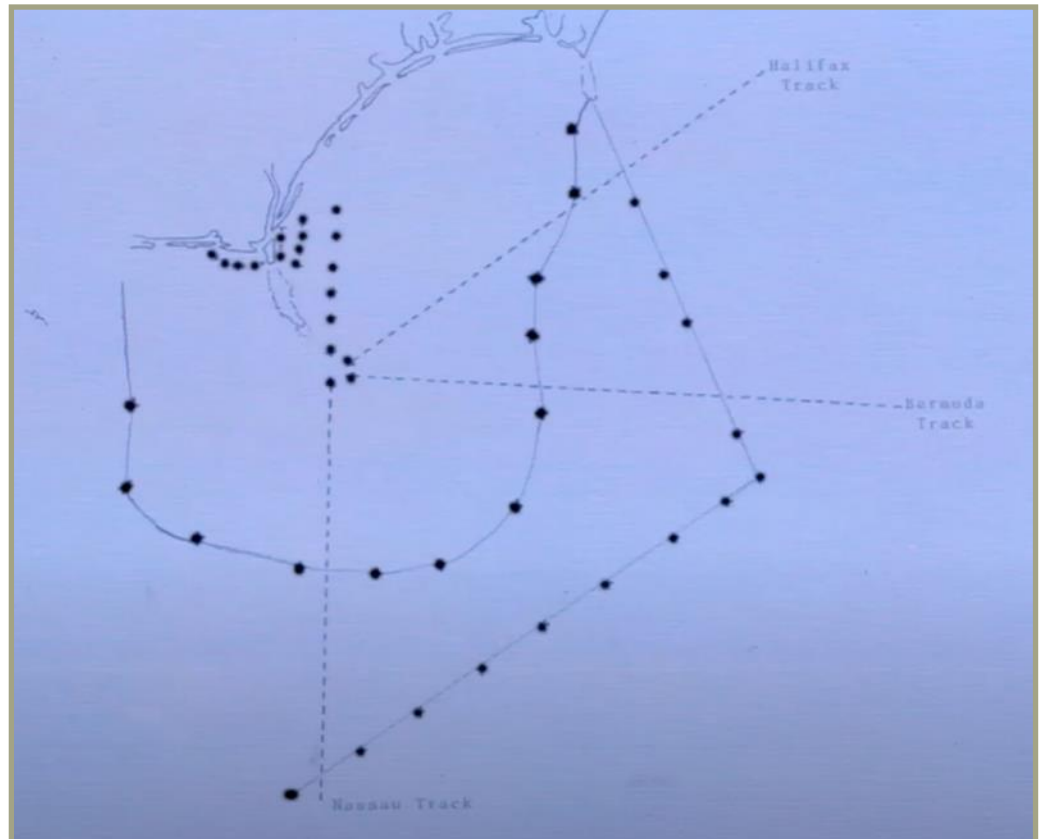
A recording of the presentation is available on YouTube through [our home page](#).



Union Blockade by Robert M. Browning, Jr., cont.



Admiral Lee's tactical arrangement of ships (above) and Admiral Porter's below.



Dr. Rutherford - Development and Use of Civil War Land Mines

In September, Professor Kenneth Rutherford, Ph.D., gave our round table a most informative and personally moving presentation about the development and use of land mines by the Confederate army in the Civil War.

Dr. Rutherford is a leader in the worldwide effort to ban the use of landmines and ameliorate the damage done to civilians by mines and other explosive ordnance. He shared in the receipt of a Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in 1997.

As an aid worker in Somalia in 1993 he was grievously wounded when his vehicle hit a landmine. The incident led to the amputation of both legs.

Today, in addition to writing books such as *America's Buried History: Landmines in the Civil War*, Dr. Rutherford teaches at James Madison University and finds time to serve as a director of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation.



Professor Fonvielle (center with back to camera) briefs Professor Rutherford (center facing camera with blue shirt).

His presentation was most powerful and enlightening. Our visit with Ken was made even more meaningful when retired Professor Chris Fonvielle, a founding member of our round table and our second president, led a tour of Fort Fisher for Professor Rutherford the next morning.

The Confederates had deployed command detonated landmines at Fort Fisher to oppose a land assault but the naval bombardment disrupted the mine field and the wires that were intended to detonate the devices so they didn't play a role in the battle in January 1865.



National Archives - Civil War

Have a question relating to military records? [History Hub](#) can help.

[National Archives - Civil War](#)

Begin your Civil War Research Learn about resources at the National Archives for researching individuals who served in the Civil War.

Request Copies of Records You can order online or use NATF Form 86 for military service records or NATF Form 85 for pension records.

Teach using Civil War Documents Use their online tool, *DocsTeach*, for teaching with primary source documents from the National Archive.

Trivia Questions

1. Who was the only man on either side, Confederate or Union, who started in the war as a private and ended as a lieutenant general?
2. What soldier of fortune, who had fought with Garibaldi for the unification of Italy in 1860, led a company of former convicts from New Orleans that was called the “Tiger Rifles”?
3. Whose activities as a Partisan Ranger were so successful that General Grant ordered that he be hanged without trial if captured?
4. As an unenrolled drummer, nine-year-old Johnny Clem of Ohio received how much pay?
5. When Federal gunboats bombarded Fort McRee, Florida, with five thousand shells in November 1861, how many defenders died?

Answers on page 7

Did you Know..?



British ship builders in Liverpool, England, knew they were working for the CSA when they produced No. 290. At least, that was the verdict of an international tribunal in 1872. Renamed the CSS Alabama, the sleek 1,050-ton sailing vessel was equipped with an auxiliary steam engine. Pounded mercilessly by a warship of the US Navy, she sank in French waters. But a post-war arbitration panel awarded the US damages of \$15.5 million in gold to compensate for “negligence” shown by the British in filling a Confederate order.

Field Trip: New Bern Battlefield Park

The Cape Fear Round Table is planning a trip to the **New Bern Battlefield Park**. The park is more than 30 acres and in superb fashion interprets the March 14, 1862 battle that secured New Bern as a base for the Union throughout the war.

New Bern Battlefield Park comprises 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. You can literally walk in the footsteps of young Confederate and Union soldiers who were here on that fateful day: March 14, 1862.

Some of you may recall Brian Kraus’s excellent presentation on the battle at a meeting in May 2019. Brian has agreed to be our guide for the visit.

The park is owned and maintained by the New Bern Historical Society and its volunteers. An impressive feature of the park are the many period earthworks preserved on the grounds. It also includes a “unique 20 foot diameter color ground map and signage that provides an overview of the battle and a starting point for tours.”

On the morning of December 4, 2021, we will meet in a central location in Wilmington to travel to the battlefield in New Bern. The means of transportation will depend on the number of participants and we will share the cost of transportation.

Please bring a “brown bag” lunch and drinks to maximize the time we can spend visiting the battlefield.

The tour of the battlefield and, potentially, outlying sites such as the location of the Union landing and the original Croatan Line that wasn’t defended by the Confederates, will take approximately three hours. Overall, this is an all-day event.

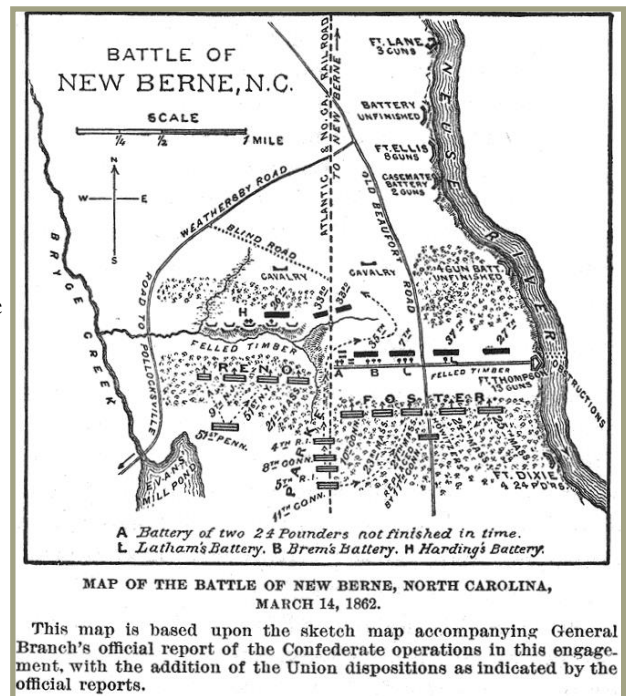
In case of inclement weather, we’ll reschedule for December 11th.

More information about the park is contained at this [website](#).

If you’re interested, please contact either party below and let us know:

Yelena Howell at ybh2035@uncw.edu, or (865) 919-6206 (call or text)

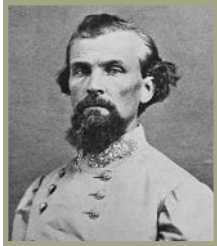
Bill Jayne at jayne.bill@gmail.com.



Brian Kraus



Trivia Answers



Nathan Bedford Forrest



Chatham Roberdeau Wheat



John Singleton Mosby



Johnny Clem

1. Nathan Bedford Forrest - Despite having no formal military training, Forrest rose from the rank of private to lieutenant general, serving as a cavalry officer at numerous engagements including the Battles of Shiloh, Chickamauga, Brice's Crossroads and Second Franklin.
2. Chatham Roberdeau Wheat - Wheat was born in Alexandria, Virginia, the son of an Episcopal clergyman and member of a distinguished Maryland family. After graduating from the University of Nashville in 1845, he studied law for a year in Memphis, Tennessee, before volunteering for service in the Mexican War. There he earned a captain's commission and, returning to civilian life, he settled in New Orleans, began a legal practice, entered politics, and was elected to the Louisiana legislature. He abandoned a promising career to join filibustering expeditions to Latin America, and by 1860 he was in Italy, fighting with English volunteers in Giuseppe Garibaldi's revolutionary forces. When the Civil War began, he returned to the United States, organized the 1st Louisiana Special Battalion, and was appointed its commander, with the rank of Major. One company of the battalion was composed of unsavory characters and former convicts from New Orleans who styled themselves the "Tiger Rifles." The name stuck to the entire battalion, and "Wheat's Tigers" soon left Louisiana for Virginia. The Tigers saw their initial action at First Bull Run.
3. John Singleton Mosby - The 43rd Battalion, "Mosby's Rangers", were partisans who melted into the civilian population when not on a raid, and at one-point General Grant ordered several captured partisans hanged for being out of uniform. Nonetheless when raiding they did wear Confederate gray at least in some fashion. When the Union began hanging Mosby's men they captured, this quickly became the norm for Mosby's men when they captured Union soldiers. This continued until late in November 1864 when Mosby wrote to General Philip Sheridan and requested that both sides return to treating prisoners of war more humanely. Both sides agreed and there were no more executions.
4. Thirteen dollars per month, which was soldier's pay but was contributed by officers and men of the Twenty-second Michigan until he was old enough to enlist.
5. About half a dozen - At 10:00 AM on the morning of November 22, 1861, the Union batteries at Fort Pickens opened fire on the Confederate steamers docked at the Navy Yard wharf. The steamers escaped the line of fire with minimal damage, but the Confederate guns at Forts McRee and Barrancas returned fire. The Union ships USS Richmond and USS Niagara soon moved closer to shore and joined the Union barrage, firing primarily at Fort McRee. Union guns shot off the flagstuffs at both McRee and Barrancas. The artillery battle continued the next day. In all, Union troops expended 5,000 rounds of ammunition while Confederate troops returned some 1,000 shots. Although Fort McRee survived, it was badly battered. Large chunks of the wall were blown away while other portions had holes shot clean through by the cannon shells. In one area a section of wall totally collapsed. Most of the wood decking within the fort had gone up in flames while one powder magazine caved in, killing six Confederates in the process.

Trivia questions and answers from the *Civil War Trivia and Fact Book* by Webb Garrison.



Fort McRee

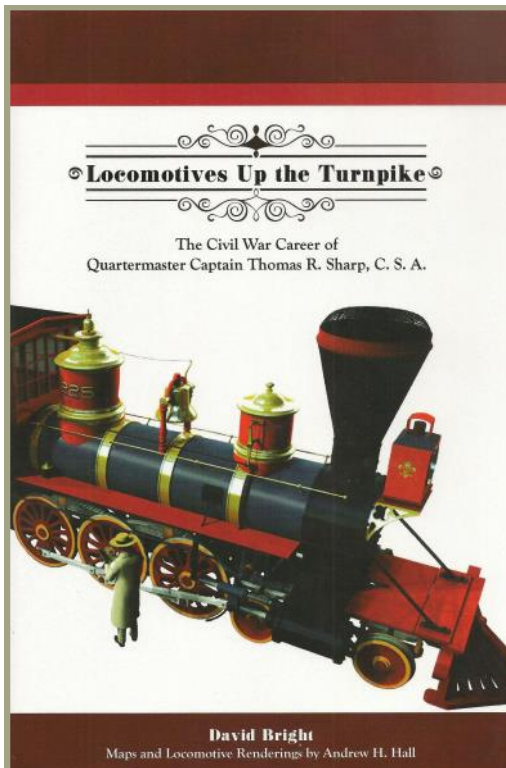
Locomotives Up the Turnpike - The Civil War Career of Quartermaster Captain Thomas R. Sharp CSA by David L. Bright



David L. Bright

When the Civil War began, the railroads of the Confederate States had the immense job of collecting the men, supplies and equipment needed to create a government and its armed forces. Railroads had never been used in the direct support of a war and the new nation soon learned that its railroad resources were far short of what would be needed. Thomas R. Sharp, a young Richmond-based railroad superintendent was tapped by the new government to haul to the Confederate railroads the cars and locomotives captured by the future Stonewall Jackson from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad near Martinsburg, Virginia.

Sharp hired dozens of men and hundreds of horses and wagons to haul the rolling stock south on the Valley of Virginia Turnpike, from Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry to Winchester to Strasburg. Seventeen locomotives and well over 100 cars were hauled over the country roads to intersections with the Manassas Gap Railroad and the Virginia Central Railroad, then on to Richmond.



The locomotives had been burned before Capt. Sharp could begin to haul them, and he had to essentially take them apart to reduce the weight to be hauled. This led to Sharp being assigned to repair the locomotives, as well as haul them. While some repairing was accomplished in Richmond, most was done in the Confederate Locomotive Shop, in Raleigh, created and run by Sharp.

By the summer of 1863, Sharp had been assigned to be the superintendent of the Charlotte & South Carolina Railroad, a critical road in the supply chain supporting Richmond and the main Confederate army. Later, Sharp was given responsibility for coordinating the railroad transportation of all of central and western South Carolina. As Gen. Sherman approached, in 1865, Sharp assisted in the evacuation of Columbia, and then worked to improve the railroads between Charlotte and Salisbury, N. C. Capt. Sharp's story has never been told before and is a unique adventure.

The book is available through the website below.

[Confederate Railroads Website](#)

With this site, David presents the details behind the railroads. Here you will find each railroad, its location and length, its type and size of rail, the number of cars and locomotives it had when the war started, and the names and technical data of each locomotive. He also provided lists of stations on each road and comments about most Confederate cities, taken from a Confederate railroad guide. I have also posted well over 20,400 transcriptions of the railroad issues-related documents that I continue to find and post.

This site was specifically created because it is so hard to locate this information. Most of the important terms are defined in Data Definitions and discussed in the Essays section.

“-- and I am anxious to hear from any of you who have data or sources to share to make this listing more complete and accurate. I am particularly looking for photographs of Confederate locomotives that I can post.”

David L. Bright

Civil War Phrases

Fascine Knife: A type of sawtooth bayonet developed in 1864.

Horological Torpedo: A torpedo set off through a timekeeping device, i.e., a time bomb. Horological means “pertaining to a timepiece.” Besides using this formal term for the weapon, people also referred to it in simpler ways, such as “clock-work torpedo.”

Pigeon Shot: A Confederate term for a smoothbore projectile in which, after it cleared the muzzle, springs popped out a pair of triangular wings to stabilize flight. Previously *pigeon shot* meant small-sized bird shot.

Shaler Bullet: A Union .58 caliber bullet that, after firing, separated into three pieces as it flew towards the target.

From *Civil War Wordbook* by Darryl Lyman

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CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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You can find us on the Web! 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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