

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

***June 13, 2011
Our 124th Meeting***



***Volume 11
Number 6***

David Thomson to Speak at June 13 Meeting On Union General Oliver Otis Howard

David Kelley Thomson has been interested in the Civil War since he was involved in an eighth-grade project on Maine's participation in the battle of Gettysburg.

David, a native of Kittery, Maine, has focused his research on soldiers that served in the Civil War from the Pine Tree State.



For several years, David was a re-enactor with Co. A of the 3rd Maine. He has spoken to audiences ranging from elementary school through college on the life

of a Civil War soldier.

In 2008, he graduated from Bowdoin College (Brunswick, Maine). David's honor's thesis was titled, "Oliver Otis Howard: the Paradox of the Christian General." David also contributed to a project on one of that college's alumni, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, of Gettysburg fame.

David's current focus of study is on the role of faith and religion in the Civil War. He has given talks to Civil War round tables throughout the Northeast and in England on General Howard.

David teaches U.S. History at Green Farm Academy in Connecticut, and is working to complete his book, *Faith and Providence: The Life and Letters of Charles Henry Howard*, an edited collection of Oliver Otis' brother's letters.

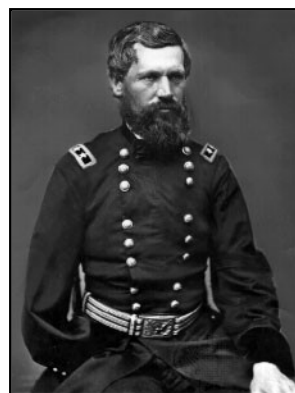
This fall, David will begin his doctoral studies in American History at the University of Georgia.

David's talk to the Round Table at our June 13 meeting will be on the topic of his thesis, Union General Oliver Otis Howard's military career.

A small portion of his thesis is available at <https://www.gettysburg.edu/dotAsset/2698912.pdf>.

~ The 'Christian General' ~

Oliver Otis Howard (1830-1909) was referred to as the "Christian General" during the Civil War because of his intense religious devotion.



Howard led troops in many of the major battles in the eastern theater during the first two years of the war and, after he was transferred to the western theater following Gettysburg, he was involved in the battle for Chattanooga, Tenn., and Sherman's March to the Sea. He lost his arm in June 1862 at the battle of Fair Oaks, Va.



The Sesquicentennial



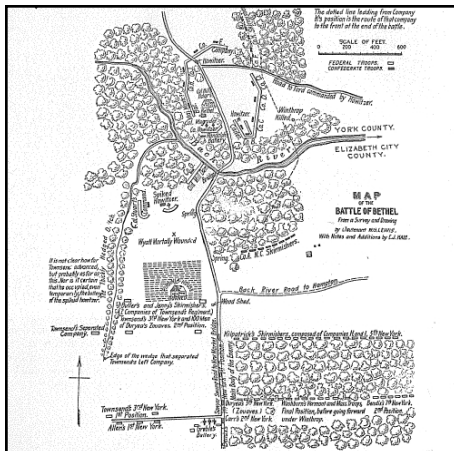
June 1861

A Clash at Big Bethel!

In June 1861, Confederate and Union armies met on the field of battle for the first time in a war that most people at the time believed would not last very long.

On June 3, approximately 3,000 Union soldiers would fight some 800 Confederate men at Phillipi, in western Virginia. The relatively bloodless battle ended with a Confederate retreat. Fighting between a handful of participants also occurred at Fairfax Court House, Va., on June 1.

A more significant engagement occurred on June 10 at Big Bethel, near Hampton Roads, Va.



The Battle of Big Bethel

Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler sent converging columns from two points on the Virginia peninsula near Newport News against Confederate defenses around the church at Big Bethel. Approximately 4,400 Union troops met about 1,400 Confederates under John B. Magruder and Daniel H. Hill.

The Union troops attempted a two-pronged assault on the Confederate defenses, but were repulsed and retired back to Hampton and Newport News. Despite the defeat, the Union was able to retain control of the very tip of the peninsula, which it used as a base for naval and amphibious operations.

Union casualties were estimated at 76 killed and wounded. Confederate casualties numbered 10.

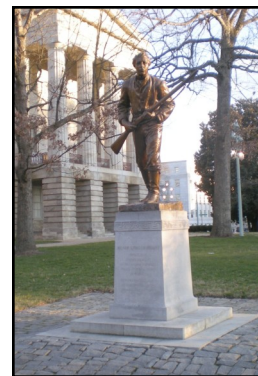
North Carolina's New State Flag

On June 21, 1861, the North Carolina Secession Convention voted to unfurl a new flag, noting two important dates in the state's history, May 20th, 1775, the date of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, and May 20th, 1861, the date the state seceded from the Union.



Henry Lawson Wyatt

A young North Carolinian from Tarboro, Henry Lawson Wyatt, born Feb. 12, 1842, was the first Confederate soldier to be killed in a land engagement during the Civil War, at the Battle of Big Bethel on June 10, 1861.



Wyatt, a private with Co. A of the 1st North Carolina Volunteers, is memorialized with a statue on the grounds surrounding the North Carolina capitol building.

Sickle's Leg Moves!

The amputated right leg of Union Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles, along with a 12-pound cannonball of the type that shattered it, recently moved from Washington, D.C., for temporary display at Ft. Detrick in Frederick, Md.



Sickles lost his leg during the Battle of Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. He donated his amputated limb to the newly founded Army Medical Museum in Washington, D.C., and is said to have regularly visited it there.

Upcoming Events

June 10-11: The Hampton (Va.) History Museum will present at 6:30 p.m. on the 10th, John V. Quarstein, who will give a lecture and sign his latest book, *Big Bethel: The First Battle*. Non-members will be charged a \$3 fee. On the 11th, at 10 a.m., the museum will hold a 150th anniversary dedication at the battlefield park free of charge. Call (757) 879-3420 for details.

June 11: At Bentonville, N.C., a dedication of grave markers honoring 20 Confederate soldiers who died in the March 1865 battle will be held at 2 p.m. Other free events are planned, including lectures and living history demonstrations. For more information, call (910) 594-0789 or see <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bentonvi>.

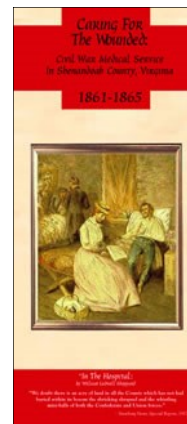
June 11: At Kure Beach, N.C., Fort Fisher State Historic Site will hold its annual event from 10 a.m. until 4:15 p.m. This year's program is "Storms of Shot & Shell" and will feature site tours, a six-gun battery, and a demonstration on period photography. For details, call (910) 458-5538 or visit <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher>.

June 24: The town of Morrisville, N.C. will unveil new historic exhibits and a video documentary on the 1865 battle at the town. Event begins at 5:30 in the town hall. For more information, contact Ben Hitchings at (919) 463-6196 or via email at bhitchings@townofmorrisville.org.

June 25: The Cedar Fork Rifles Preservation Society will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the organization of the North Carolina Grays/Cedar Fork Rifles at the town of Morrisville, N.C. from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. For more information on the event, email wgo6regnc@aol.com.

Free Civil War Medicine Brochure

A new free brochure with a map highlighting the Shenandoah Valley's role as a hospital center in the Civil War now is available. The guide, "Caring for the Wounded: Civil War Medical Service in Shenandoah County, Virginia 1861-1865" also has information on the area's battlefields including New Market (May 1864), Fisher's Hill (September 1864), and Tom's Brook (October 1864).



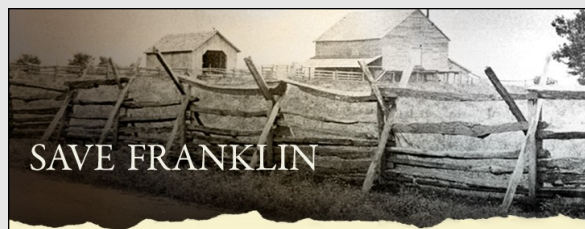
For a copy, call (540) 459-6227 or stop by an area visitor center.

Preservation News

The Civil War Trust continues its efforts to save pieces of the once-lost battlefield at Franklin, Tenn. That battle was fought on Nov. 30, 1864.

The Trust's current preservation effort involves a 0.2 acre section of property in front of the cotton gin where a costly Confederate assault through rifle and cannon fire took place.

Confederate Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne, whose division charged across the targeted property, was killed nearby.



The Trust's goal in this campaign is to raise \$103,000. Donations will be matched 2 to 1.

For details on the Civil War Trust's preservation effort at Franklin, see <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/franklin/cottongin10>.

News of the RCWRT



Big Bethel Sign Update

The Round Table was one of a handful of organizations to donate funds to help preserve the last section of the Big Bethel battlefield that is accessible. One of the new interpretive signs planned for the battlefield will note our support. As a group and individually, the RCWRT gave more than \$2,000 toward the cause (see *The Knapsack*, Vm. 10, No. 6, pp. 1,2).

Upcoming RCWRT Meetings

July: Jeff Toalson, the CW letters of Richard Watkins
August: Jack Travis on E. Porter Alexander, rebel gunner
September: Betty Vaughn, a first person presentation
October: John Sokolosky, Sherman in the Carolinas
November: George Kundahl, Stephen Dodson Ramseur
December: Arch T. Allen III, pardon Gov. Holden

Road Trip to Richmond

The Brunswick County Round Table has contacted the RCWRT to see if our members want to join them on tours of battlefields in the Richmond, Va., area from Oct. 15-17 that will be led by noted author and historian Bob Krick. The tour will cover the Civil War campaigns of 1862 and 1864. Cost is \$222 per person, which does not include the hotel and three meals. For more information, contact Mike Powell at mpowell6@ec.rr.com or (910) 278-3545.

North Carolina Secedes (Again)!

On May 21, a commemoration of North Carolina's historic vote to secede was held on the state capitol grounds. In attendance was member Ken Oppenheim, who took this photo:



The Knapsack



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RCWRT Score Card

Members 125

May 2011 Attendance

Meeting 39

The Raleigh Civil War Round Table was formed on March 12, 2001, and is a 501(c)(3) "tax exempt organization." We meet on the second Monday of most months at 7:00 pm, at the N.C. Museum of History, (5 Edenton St. across from the State Capitol). Members and guests are encouraged to meet for supper at K&W Cafeteria (511 Woodburn Rd, Cameron Village) at 5:15; and for further discussion at The Mellow Mushroom (Glenwood Avenue & Peace Street) immediately after the meeting. Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$15 for students. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20.