

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

***July 11, 2011
Our 125th Meeting***



***Volume 11
Number 7***

Jeff Toalson to Present Richard Watkins On ‘The Great Unpleasantness’ at July 11 Meeting

Jeff Toalson is a native of Missouri who has lived in Williamsburg, Va., for the past 25 years.

He has authored two books on the Civil War and regularly speaks to historical groups.



Jeff received his bachelor's degree in business management from Southwest Missouri State University. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1971-1973 and was an auto aftermarket sales representative for 35 years.

His newest book is titled *Send Me a Pair of Old Boots & Kiss My Little Girls — The Civil War Letters of Richard and Mary Watkins, 1861-1865*. The work stems from his discovery of previously unpublished letters held by the Virginia Historical Society. Jeff also has authored another book: *No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion: A Composite Diary of the Last 16 Months of the Confederacy from 1864 to 1865*.

Jeff is a member of the Williamsburg Civil War Roundtable and is the 1st Lt. Commander of the James City Cavalry Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (Camp No. 2095).

At the Raleigh Civil War Round Table's July meeting, Jeff will don period attire and assume the character of Richard Watkins in 1890, telling stories about “the great unpleasantness” during which he and his wife exchanged more than 300 letters.

~ Richard and Mary Watkins ~

Richard Watkins was a lawyer and farmer in Prince Edward County, Virginia. During the Civil War, he served as a captain in Co. K of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry. Richard and his unit fought in campaigns throughout Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.



Richard's wife, Mary, remained at home, raising their three daughters and managing the family farm. The two exchanged approximately 300 letters which tell a touching love story as they endured hardship and separation.



The Sesquicentennial



July 1861

The Yankees Run!

On July 21, 1861, the first major battle of the Civil War took place, a Confederate victory that all but extinguished the hopes for a rapid resolution of the conflict.

Under political pressure to quickly end the rebellion, Union General Irvin McDowell and an army of some 35,000 men marched toward Richmond, Va. About 25 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., near the city of Manassas, Va., they would meet nearly 32,000 Confederate soldiers under Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard and Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, who had re-enforced the main force under Beauregard.



First Manassas (Bull Run)

Initially, the Union army's assault drove back the Confederate forces, which fled in disorder toward Henry Hill. However, the Union troops stopped their advance to reorganize, giving the Confederates enough time to reform their lines. An assault by fresh Confederate units on the Union right flank cause the latter army to withdraw. At first orderly, the retreat turned into a panicked rout, and roads to Washington, D.C., were clogged with soldiers as well as civilians who had come to watch the fight.

This first major clash between the two untrained and untested armies ended with approximately 2,900 Union soldiers having been killed, wounded, and captured, and the Confederates suffering casualties of nearly 2,000.

Residents of both the North and South now realized that the war would be much longer and bloodier than they had anticipated.

Slowly Strangling the South

In May 1861, Union General-in-Chief Winfield Scott outlined a strategic plan to cut off the Southern states, an approach heavily reliant on blockading their ports. Although President Lincoln already had declared a blockade, Scott's plan became known as the "Anaconda Plan." The blockade was ridiculed in both the North and the South, as, when the Civil War began, the Union Navy had only a few dozen serviceable warships.



However, by July, efforts to improve the U.S. Navy had made a difference, and an effective blockade of the South had begun.

'Stonewall Jackson'

Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson earned his famous nickname during the battle of First Manassas when Bernard Bee shouted to his men: "There stands Jackson like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians!"



Jackson's statue at Manassas

Appomattox to Display Lee Items

The French-made ceremonial sword that Robert E. Lee carried as well as the uniform he wore when he surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox in April 1865 will be displayed there when a new museum opens in the spring of 2012.



The 40 1/2 inch sword was a gift given to Lee in 1863 from an unknown Marylander. It has been displayed at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Va., since 1918. Park historians say Lee never offered the sword upon his surrender and Grant did not ask for it.

Upcoming Events

July 9: At Bennett Place in Durham N.C., "Textiles and Tarheels of North Carolina," a program on the impact of the textile industry on the state. For details, call (919) 383-4345 or see <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bennett>.

July 9: Historic Stagville in Durham N.C., holds a free showing of the classic movie, "Gone With the Wind." Free popcorn as well. 7 p.m. until 11 p.m. For details, call (919) 620-0120 or visit <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/stagville/stagville.htm>.

July 9: At Bentonville battlefield in Four Oaks, N.C., "19th Century Fashion," a presentation on clothing and fashion during the Civil War. 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the visitor center. For details, call (910) 594-0789 or see <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bentonvi>.

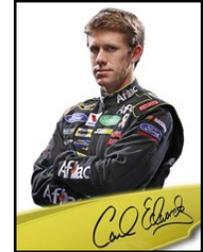
July 16-17: At Bennett Place in Durham N.C., "Union Occupation of the Carolinas," a living history program on occupation of North Carolina after the surrender. Call (919) 383-4345 or visit <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bennett>.

July 23-24: At the Zebulon Vance Birthplace Historic Site in Weaverville, N.C., a living history program titled "War Comes to the Mountains" will be held. For details, call (828) 645-6706 or go to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/vance>.

July 30: The Duke Homestead in Durham, N.C., will host a lecture, "Your Boy Jim: Tobacco and Slave Leasing". At 2 p.m. Telephone (919) 477-5498 or go online to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/duke>.

NASCAR and the Civil War?

So what do NASCAR and the Civil War have in common? HBO is in the process of producing a new eight-hour mini series titled "To Appomattox" and is trying to recruit NASCAR drivers to take some of the roles. Carl Edwards is scheduled to portray Gen. John B. Gordon, CSA.



HBO says NASCAR exemplifies the patriotism, competitiveness, and regional and national pride that was demonstrated during the Civil War. TV and movie actors and country music stars also will play historical characters in the upcoming series. For details, see <http://www.toappomattox.com>.

Preservation News

The Civil War Trust continues its efforts to save additional portions of the Wilderness battlefield just west of Fredericksburg, Va. That battle was fought from May 7-9, 1864.

Both armies suffered heavy casualties, and the battle was a tactical draw. However, unlike other Union generals, Ulysses S. Grant pressed forward following the engagement.



The Trust's current preservation effort involves a 1.4 acre section where Grant's headquarters was located during the battle.

The Trust's goal in this campaign is to raise \$32,100. Donations will be matched 6.4 to 1.

For details on the effort to save another critical piece of the Wilderness battlefield, see <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/the-wilderness.html>.

News of the RCWRT



Upcoming RCWRT Meetings

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

A Message From The President

"It's summer and many of us are traveling. But be sure to try and make the Round Table programs. The Program Committee has scheduled exceptional programs throughout the year and a strong attendance will help encourage repeat visits from the speakers."

Second Saturday Programs

The North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has launched programs aimed at helping children and their parents understand history. The programs are held on the second Saturdays of each month at historic sites around the state. Due to the sesquicentennial, many of them have a Civil War focus. For more information, see <http://www.ncculture.com> or call (919) 807-7385.

Confederate Body Count Update

On Wednesday, July 27, Josh Howard, a researcher with the North Carolina Office of Archives and History is to present information that he has uncovered in his review of the state's casualties during the Civil War. Howard, who has spent more than a year on his investigation, found long-standing figures to be inaccurate (*The Knapsack*, Vm. 10, No. 10, p. 2). Howard will also share some of the unusual soldiers' experiences he discovered during the free lunchtime event, "History á la Carte: Recounting Civil War Sacrifices," at the N.C. Museum of History. Event begins at 12:10 p.m. Bring a lunch, free beverages will be provided. For more information, call (919) 807-7900 or visit <http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org>.



The Knapsack

is the official newsletter of the RCWRT and is published on Wednesday before each meeting. (July 2011 Circulation: 190)

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RCWRT Score Card

Members 125

June 2011 Attendance

Meeting 41

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.