

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

December 10, 2012
Our 142nd Meeting



Volume 12
Number 12

The Southern String Band to Perform at December 10 Meeting in State Capitol

December features our annual holiday event at the Old State Capitol. This year, we will have “old time” music as well as the usual hors d’oeuvres, drinks, and desserts.



The evening’s entertainment will be provided by The Southern String Band, made up of a group of nine friends from Raleigh who enjoy playing old time string band music together.

The band currently comprises of Kurt Eichenberger (mandolin and fiddle), Becky McElroy (banjo), Anne Miller (fiddle), Vicky Montague (fiddle), Bob Peter (guitar), Charley Nelson (tenor guitar, tenor banjo, mandolin, and bass), Ron Raxter (bass), Wade Smith (fiddle), and Mike Southern (fiddle).

Join us for some holiday music, fun, and fellowship! Please bring a snack, dessert, or beverage to share.

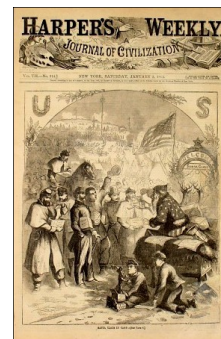
For more information on The Southern String Band, visit <http://www.kearc.com/southernstringband/home.htm>.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Our annual holiday event will once again be held at the State Capitol building, across the street from our usual meeting place. The event also will begin earlier than usual, at 6:30.

~ Christmas, 1862 ~

The Civil War saw its second Christmas in 1862. Soldiers on both sides understandably yearned for their homes and families.



Harper's Weekly, Jan. 3, 1863, Edition

The *Harper's Weekly* cover art for Christmas 1862 featured Santa Claus at a Union camp, handing out gifts to Federal soldiers (see illustration above). One of the most famous diarists of the Civil War, Union Lt. Elisha Hunt Rhodes wrote on Dec. 25, 1862, “I should like to be home this Christmas night.”



The Sesquicentennial



December 1862

Union Defeat at Fredericksburg

From Dec. 11-15, 1862, Fredericksburg, Va., would be the scene of one of the most one-sided battles of the Civil War. The Union army would suffer massive casualties through a series of ineffective assaults against well-entrenched Confederates.

After Union engineers laid five pontoon bridges across the Rappahannock River under fire, Federal forces would move across. On Dec. 13, Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, recently given command of the Army of the Potomac, would order several futile frontal attacks on Prospect Hill and Marye's Heights that resulted in massive casualties.



Federal Assault at Fredericksburg

Watching the destruction of the assaulting Federal forces during the battle, Confederate General Robert E. Lee would say to Lt. Gen. James Longstreet that "It is well that war is so terrible. We should grow too fond of it."

At Fredericksburg, Union forces would see more than 12,600 casualties, with approximately 1,284 soldiers killed, 9,600 wounded, and 1,769 captured or missing. Confederates would lose half as many, some 608 killed, 4,116 wounded, and 653 captured or missing. Union generals C. Feger Jackson and George Bayard, and Confederate generals Thomas R. Cobb and Maxey Gregg also were killed.

On Dec. 15, Burnside would call off the offensive and re-cross the river, ending the campaign.

Fighting in Mississippi

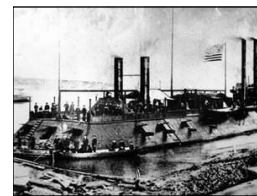
The Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, also called Walnut Hills, would be fought Dec. 26-29 in the western part of Mississippi. Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's move on Vicksburg was repulsed by Confederate forces under Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton. Union casualties greatly outnumbered Confederate losses.



A few days prior to that battle, Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn raided the Union supply depot at Holly Springs, Miss., established by Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. About 1,500 Federal prisoners were taken and nearly \$1.5 million in army supplies were destroyed in that raid.

The Sinking of The *Cairo*

On Dec. 12, the U.S.S. *Cairo* sinks after hitting an underwater mine placed in the Mississippi River by Confederate forces.



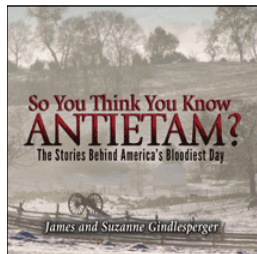
The *Cairo*

The 512-ton ironclad would sink in 12 minutes, becoming the first armored war vessel to be sunk by an electrically activated mine. The *Cairo* was commissioned in January 1862 and was one of seven ironclads launched by the Union as part of its efforts to control the Mississippi River.

Also in December, the U.S.S. *Monitor*, the first ironclad commissioned by the U.S. Navy, would sink in a storm off of Cape Hatteras, N.C., while under tow.

Planning a Trip to Antietam?

If you are planning to visit the Antietam battlefield, I would highly recommend you take with you a copy of *So You Think You Know Antietam?*, a book that tells the stories behind the site's monuments and the soldiers who fought there.



The book, by James and Suzanne Gindelsperger, was recently released by John F. Blair, a publisher based in Winston-Salem. The book is divided into different chapters, representing major sections of the August 1862 battle. Nearly 300 photographs of the dozens of monuments and other structures on the battlefield are included.

More information about the book is available at <http://www.blairpub.com/alltitles/soantietam.php>.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 6: Ft. Fisher at Kure Beach, N.C., will hold a holiday open house with seasonal refreshments, decorations, and live music by area choral and instrumental groups. From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call (910) 458-5538 or see <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher/fisher.htm> for more.

Dec. 8: The state historic site in Edenton, N.C., will host a living history artillery program featuring the Confederate Edenton Bell Battery. Call (252) 482-2637 for details or go to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/iredell/iredell.htm>.

Dec. 15-16: Bennett Place in Durham, N.C., presents "Christmas in the Carolinas," a living history event that depicts how Christmas was celebrated on a Piedmont North Carolina farm during the Civil War. Ole St. Nick will make a visit, a hogs head will be roasted, and other living history performances are planned. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sat., and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sun. For details on this free event, telephone (919) 383-4345 or visit <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bennett/bennett.htm>.

Dec. 15-16: The "Battle of Goldsborough Bridge" re-enactment will take place at the battlefield historical park near Goldsboro, N.C., from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days. Battles are scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sat., and 1 p.m. on Sun. For details and directions on this free event, go to <http://www.goldsboroughbridge.com> or (919) 736-4277.

A Holiday Gift Idea

A 2013 commemorative calendar covering the third year of the Civil War is available from eParks. The calendar includes illustrations and paintings that highlight the important battles and events of 1863.



The issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg and Vicksburg campaigns, and the death of Stonewall Jackson are among the events that are featured. The 2013 calendar sells for \$8.95 plus shipping.

To order the commemorative calendar, go to http://civilwar.eparks.com/store/product/97979/*1863-the-Third-Year-of-the-War-Commemorative-Civil-War-Calendar-2013, or call (877) 628-7275.

Preservation News

Donations are being sought to help preserve the Lutheran Seminary building in Gettysburg that was in the center of the first day of fighting during what was likely the most important battle in American history.



From the cupola of the structure, Union Brig. Gen. John Buford observed the Confederate approach. The grounds saw fighting on July 1, 1863, and the building served as headquarters for both sides, as well as a hospital. In addition to rehabilitating the building, a new museum at the site is planned to be opened in time for the battle's 150th anniversary.

For details on this preservation effort, visit <http://www.seminaryridgemuseum.org> or telephone (717) 339-1300.

News of the RCWRT



Upcoming RCWRT Meetings

January: Annual event with Ed Bearss

February: LeRae Umfleet, Wilmington race riots

March: Ernie Dollar, PTSD and war's end in NC

April: Marvin Nicholson, the African-American experience

May: Sandy Barnard, a private in the Irish Brigade

June: Stephen Wise, blockade running

July: Rick Walton, Raleigh's Pettigrew Hospital

August: Debbi Blake, CW research at the State Archives

Have You Renewed?

Annual dues (\$30, individual or family; \$15, students) should have been remitted in September for the next year. If you have not renewed, please either mail your check to:

David June, Treasurer
3912 White Chapel Way
Raleigh, NC 27615

or, bring your check or cash to the next meeting.

Tax-Exempt Donations

As 2012 comes to a close, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the RCWRT or our Gatton Fund. Each year, the Raleigh Civil War Round Table honors an individual who has distinguished themselves through their work or efforts related to the study of the Civil War through its T. Harry Gatton Award. The next award will be presented at our annual event with Ed Bearss in January.

At The Museum

The North Carolina Museum of History recently unveiled the second part of its Civil War series, titled "The Raging Storm: 1863." The exhibit focuses on a year of significant battles during which more than 10,000 North Carolinians became casualties. Artifacts include handguns, battle flags, uniforms, and surgical instruments. Also on display is a battle flag carried by the 18th North Carolina, whose troops accidentally shot and killed Lt. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson at Chancellorsville, Va., in May 1863.



The Knapsack

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RCWRT Score Card

Members	115
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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.