



MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

February 2021

Remaining lectures, locations and dates of the upcoming 2020-21 lectures. Please note that the March through December programs are new. All of these will be Zoom presentations.

March 31	John Querceten	Ironclads strike: The <i>CSS Palmetto State</i> and the <i>CSS Chicora</i>
April 28	Ed Flanagan	Gen. Grant at the Battle of Belmont
May 26 Redivided	Paul Quigley	Arlington Nat. Cemetery: Where American Reunited and
September 22	Jack Rabbit	The Civil War, Why Did So Many Die'
October 27	Carolyn Coppola	Reconstruction, Bluffton & Campbell AME Church
December 1	C. Russell Hordes	Morris Island and the Civil War

February 2021 Program

One of our favorite speakers is scheduled for our February program—Jack Davis.

William C. Davis (Jack) a native of Independence, Missouri, was educated in Northern California, spent 20 years in editorial management in the magazine and book publishing industry, and then left the industry to spend the next decade working as a writer and consultant.

He is the author/editor of more than 50 books and numerous documentary screenplays in the fields of southern history and the Civil War. He was the on-camera senior consultant for 52 episodes of the Arts & Entertainment Network/History Channel series, "Civil War Journal." He has served as historical consultant for several television and film productions, including "The Blue and the Gray," "George Washington," and "The Perfect Tribute."

Jack is a three-time winner of the Jefferson Davis Award given for book-length works on Confederate history. One of his recent books is *The Greatest Fury: The Battle of New Orleans and the Rebirth of America*.

At Virginia Tech, he serves as the director of programs for the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies and as a professor of history.

The title of Jack's presentation is "The Vice President Flees—General Jack C. Breckinridge's Escape from the Confederacy." Breckinridge, who faced indictment for treason in the Union, was our youngest ever vice president. He became a general officer in the CSA in 1861, and in 1865, the Secretary of War. He organized the government for evacuation when Richmond fell to the Federals. On April 2, 1865 he was almost the last man to leave the capital after seeing off President Davis and other cabinet members. President Davis was captured on May 10th and Breckinridge was free to make his own escape.

Accompanied by his adjutant, an enslaved man named Tom Ferguson, who belonged to a friend, Captain John Taylor Wood, the commander of the privateer *Tallahassee* and two other soldiers. Breckinridge rode south into Florida and made his way by horse and boat. His party turned pirates and had a running sea battle with deserters and renegades. A real true-life adventure, they finally attempted to sail to Cuba across the Gulf Stream.

Importance of Bluffton in the Civil War

Source: David Lauderdale's column from January 11, 2018

Burnt Church Road

For years, I've been asked how this main thoroughfare into and out of Bluffton got its name.

And here is the answer:

It's a mystery. And there is no smoking church.

"Apparently, once upon a time a church in the vicinity burned, but we don't know where it is," said former mayor Emmett McCracken at Stock Farm Antiques.

Alan Ulmer, Jr. gets a little warmer.

"it was a praise house that burned on that road," he says with a drawl steeped by the generations of Ulmers living in Bluffton and owning much of the land around Burnt Church Road.

Praise houses were part of the Gullah culture. Few are left standing, and those are rarely used. But at one time, these small, wood frame buildings dotted the landscape as places of exuberant and prayerful worship on weeknights.

But Ulmer does not know where this praise house was or when it may have burned.

“It was probably built on live oak blocks, which they used to use a lot.” He said, “and everything burned out completely.”

Ulmer said that “the old folks”—his father and friends in the generation ahead of him—called it Palmer Avenue.

But he does not know who it would have been named for.” “I have not heard of a Palmer from that time,” he said.

Jacob Martin, who was a child in Bluffton eight decades ago, said “They claim there was a church there that burned down, but I can ‘t even remember a church being out on that road.

“That was a turpentine area,”

And, “we used to take our cows down there in the winter, and they stayed in the fields in the area that’s now Forman Hill Road.”

The late Thomas G. “Tommy” Heyward, who had a home on Forman Hill Road and told many stories about local history, couldn’t solve the mystery even if he was still here.

“Tommy was asked that a lot, and he said he never found out how it got that name,” said his wife, Joan Heyward.

Jo Rackliff, who owns a business on Burnt Church Road, said she’s heard plenty of tall tales over the years.

“The most common piece of folklore I’ve heard is that when troops came through here in the Civil War, they were told to burn everything but the churches. But one day the soldiers got drunk and burned a church on Burnt Church Road.

But there’s more.

As an extension of that, they say the Rose Hill Mansion was saved because they though it was a church.”

But I don’t see that in the history books. That includes a book about the day in June 1863 that federal troops torched a lot of Bluffton. Jeff Fulghum’s *The Bluffton Expedition: The Burning of Bluffton, South Carolina, During the Civil War.*”

In more modern history, I’ve been told, the long straight street was a place to race cars when it was just a country road.

It’s a lot busier today, but it’s still a link between Old Town and the main highway, U.S. 278, or Fording Island Road.

But Jacob Martin recalls more people using what is S.C. 46, or Bluffton Road, to get from town to the highway.

“On a Sunday evening, we’d walk out to the highway to what we called Mr. Bob Walker’s Corner, Martin said of the S.C. 46-U.S. 278 intersection that today boasts the Low Country Motors car lot, a Sam’s Club and Walmart Supercenter, and the entrance to The Crescent, a major housing development.

“We’d go west down 278 to Buck Island Road and turn there, unless we walked down to my aunt’s house on Pinckney Colony Road and eat something with her. We’d walk Buck Island Road to S.C. 46 and back to town where we started.”

This was a ritual, he said because, “there ain’t nothing else to do.”

Except maybe make up stories about how Burnt Church Road got its name.

American Cruise Lines

When we can start living again, American Cruise Lines has several cruises you might be interested in.

They are

New Orleans Round Trip

Lower Mississippi

LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE, INC.

Annual Membership for all household members (to Aug 31, 2021): **\$20.00**

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We always need volunteers to continue making the LCWRT successful.

Please check the area(s) for which you are willing to volunteer:

- ____ Program Committee: help select topics & speakers ____ Assist in Production/Distribution of the *Minie Ball Gazette*
____ Assist on Program Night (Greeter, Collect Tickets or Guest Fees, Tally Program Attendance)
____ Historian ____ Maintain Membership Roster ____ Work at Sun City Club Fair ____ Web Site Maintenance

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Note: The website address is

www.lcwrt.squarespace.com and it can

be used to get current and historical LCWRT information.