

# THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE

## LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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*Dedicated to Historic Preservation and Enlightenment*

TRUST IN GOD BUT KEEP  
YOUR POWDER DRY

JANUARY 2002 ISSUE 014

### NEWS FLASH ----

**JANUARY 16TH MEETING . . .**

**PROFESSOR "BUD" ROBERTSON SPEAKS  
ON "WHY SOLDIERS FOUGHT"**

**Held at McCracken Middle School.  
DINNER RESERVATIONS MUST BE  
RECEIVED BY JANUARY 5TH.**

**Mail enclosed reservation form and check.**

### MAIL CALL

by Bob Eberly

### A CONFEDERATE CHRISTMAS

Sarah Fowler Morgan, the unmarried daughter of a prominent Baton Rouge judge, kept a diary during the Civil War years. Published as *Sarah Morgan, The Civil War Diary of a Southern Woman*, it gives the reader an intimate portrait of life on "the home front" during those tragic times. As the war that everyone thought would be over in three months dragged on through its third year, holidays normally filled with joy and fellowship assumed a more somber tone. Christmas in Baton Rouge in 1863 was one such holiday.

*"Friday December 25<sup>th</sup> . Night*

*[T]his has been almost a Merry Christmas. All the week the streets have been crowded, and on the two days I ventured out, I saw almost every*

*face I knew here. Last night Sister went to a ball*

*and the children went to another; and as we went up to help them dress, we had bustle and fun enough even for Christmas Eve. The children looked like angels, and Sister was as beautiful as usual. . . .*

*After breakfast [on Christmas morning] Edmund came in bearing a tray full of Christmas gifts from Brother and Sister. Besides the usual bonbons, there was a dress for mother and two beautiful bonnets for Miriam and me. . . .*

*We dined with Brother alone, Sister being too sick after her party to leave her bed. And now we are back at home again, through the rain and cold, and I have put myself in my nightgown, writing and thinking of very different things. Every few moments I drop my head and repeat: Lilly in Macon, Miss., Sis in San Francisco, Gibbes [Sarah's brother] a prisoner on Johnson's Island, George [another brother] somewhere between Richmond and the Rappahannock, Jimmy [a third brother] in Cherbourg [serving on the CSS Alabama], father and Hal [an older brother who had been killed in a duel] in the graveyard. O that graveyard! If I could plant my flowers there once more and train the vines!*

*I dreamed last night that I was sitting by Hal's grave, only that he was buried in the earth, instead of that close vault; and that as I plucked the weeds that covered it, gradually I unburied him. O how distinctly I saw him! I dreamed he opened his eyes and said "O I have waited for you for so long! I am so lonely here! . . . And I held him in my arms, kneeling by him, and tried to comfort him. . . . And I tried so hard to warm him into life; but he did not want to come back; he only wanted me by his grave. And I laid him down*

**THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE**  
**LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE - JANUARY 2002**

*tenderly, in my dream, and sat watching him as he slept.”*

Sarah married in the years following the war, raised a family of her own and died in 1909. Her brother George died in Confederate service January 12, 1864. Her brother Gibbes died as a prisoner of war nine days later. Her brother Jimmy survived the war.

**\* WHY THEY FOUGHT \***

To preserve the Union, to defend States' Rights, to abolish slavery, to preserve that "peculiar institution"—all of these are cited as reasons why hundreds of thousands of young men left their homes, farms and stores to take up arms during the American Civil War. But how many of those young men marched off to war simply to impress the young ladies in their hometowns? How many of them enlisted because their friends or older brothers had? And how many of them rushed to the colors seeking glory, afraid that the war would be over before they could reach the front lines?

Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson will answer these questions, and many others, when he returns to the Lowcountry January 16, 2002 to address our Civil War Round Table (please note that this is the THIRD Wednesday of the month). His topic, "Why They Fought," goes to the heart of the Civil War and is sure to provoke much thought and discussion. Those of you who were with us last January when Dr. Robertson spoke on the causes of the Civil War know what an outstanding and entertaining speaker he is. Those of you who will be seeing him for the first time are in for a real treat!

Dr. Robertson, widely acclaimed as one of the nation's leading Civil War historians, received his B.A. from Randolph-Macon College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Emory University. He is the Alumni Distinguished Professor and Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Civil War

Studies at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. Most of us know him as a frequent commentator on A & E's "Civil War Journal." Prof. Robertson has written or edited over twenty books and has received every major honor bestowed in the field of Civil War history. His most recent book, *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend*, was chosen as the main selection of two major book clubs and has won eight literary awards.

We are indeed honored that Dr. Robertson will be joining us once again here in the Lowcountry. Be sure to send in your reservations in time for them to be received before the January 5<sup>th</sup> deadline. Also, while Professor Robertson will entertain questions at the conclusion of his talk, time will preclude any in-depth discussion of issues raised therein. Therefore, we are delighted to tell you that "Bud" has graciously agreed to attend a "Morning After" event to be held at the new Palmetto Electric headquarters on Route 278 in Bluffton (please note that this is a change from the Hilton head Public Library location). Seating for this exciting opportunity to participate in a more traditional round table event with one of America's leading historians will be limited, so if you are interested in attending please call Bob Eberly at 785-5393 as soon as possible to confirm your place.

**MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS**

**January 16 - General Meeting -  
Professor "Bud" Robertson on "Why Soldiers  
Fought" - Held at McCracken Middle School**  
**January 17 - "The Morning After" with  
Professor "Bud" Robertson - Held at Palmetto  
Electric on #278**

**February 13 - General Meeting - Ed  
Bearss on "The Battle of First Manassas"- Held  
at McCracken Middle School -**

**March 13 - General Meeting - President  
Lincoln returns**

**THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE**  
**LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE - JANUARY 2002**

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!**

The initial response by our membership to next February's South Atlantic Civil War Symposium has been excellent. The event, presented by the Blue & Gray Education Society, will take place February 27-March 2, 2002 at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront and will be hosted by your Lowcountry Civil War Round Table. While many of you took advantage of the significant discount available to those who registered before November 30, a worthwhile discount is still available to our members who register before January 15, 2002. If you register before then, you may attend the symposium for a fee of \$263. This represents a substantial savings over the \$350 fee charged to the general public.

We encourage those of you who are still thinking about attending the symposium to fill out and return the enclosed registration form as soon as possible. If you have any questions, or would like any additional information, please feel free to call Bob Eberly (785-5393), Jack Keller (671-5260), Tom Oliver (705-7217) or Bob Zabawa (341-9142).

**FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER**  
**DEADLINE IS JANUARY 12TH**

**THE HISTORY OF FORT SUMTER**  
by George Cabiness

At our last meeting, Rick Hatcher relayed the interesting history behind the development of Fort Sumter.

At the start of 1861, despite 31 years of construction, Fort Sumter was still not finished. After several failed attempts to supply the fort, the governor of South Carolina refused to allow food resupply. Even so, Major Robert Anderson would not surrender the fort. The Confederates, under the command of General Beauregard, opened fire using both ordinary shells and heated cannonballs (hot shots) which set the barracks on fire.

Resistance was hopeless, and Major Anderson surrendered after 34 hours with no casualties on either side.

The Confederates rebuilt the fort, greatly strengthening it, and held it until Feb. 1865. R. E. Lee described Charleston as "our only channel to the outside world." But the Union forces did not give up. They captured rebel coastal fortifications and were able to mount a siege of the fort in July 1863. They used very heavy ordnance, such as 15 inch Dahlgren guns weighing 42,000 pounds, firing 400 pound balls. They caused great damage; some of the walls were knocked down to 52 ft. and others to only 23 ft. During the siege, seven million pounds of shells were fired, 52 men were killed and 267 were wounded. The fort did not surrender until General Sherman captured Charleston.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA -  
BEAUFORT PRESENTS AN EXCITING  
LECTURE SERIES

*North versus South: Sectionalism and the Civil War*

Beaufort County and the surrounding area were central to reconstruction efforts after the Civil War. This role was so great that a National Heritage Area to commemorate the important local role in the history of reconstruction is in the development process. USC Beaufort has planned a series of lectures for the general public to call attention to this project and to encourage local participation in the development. In addition, the University has long envisioned the establishment of an institute, which would study, preserve and present the many components of this unique section of the country. These lectures set the foundation for the establishment of both entities.

This lecture series builds on the success of last winter's series *New College, New Nation*. This year's series seeks to spark the public's interest and broaden its knowledge of the history

**THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE**  
**LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE - JANUARY 2002**

of the United States prior to and during the Civil War. The lectures will raise and grapple with such issues as: what was the Old South, what were its conceptions of time compared to those of the North, what prompted the Northern invasion and subsequent occupation of the sea islands so early in the Civil War, what was the strategy for the invasion, what was the role of women in the antebellum South, why was military leadership of the Confederacy so important in developing a sense of a Southern nation, what can the antebellum experience inform us about the Southern and American experience, and what are the legacies of the antebellum and Civil War periods?

These lectures should increase the public's appreciation for some of the richest and most interesting periods of American history, and we hope they inspire many in the audience to begin or return to the study of the middle period of United States history.

**Date:** January 9 7 p.m.  
**Place:** USCB Performing Arts Center (PAC)  
**Speaker:** Mark Smith, Associate Professor of History, USC  
**Title:** Listening to Nineteenth-Century America: Part I  
**Brief:** Native of Great Britain, Dr. Smith has written multiple books on the South.

**Date:** January 15 7 p.m.  
**Place:** USCB PAC  
**Speaker:** Dr. Lawrence Rowland

**Date:** January 23 7 p.m.  
**Place:** USCB PAC  
**Speaker:** Dr. Mark Smith  
**Title:** Listening to Nineteenth-Century America: II  
**Brief:** Dr. Mark Smith picks up his topic in Part II Listening to Nineteenth-Century America

**Date:** January 29 7 p.m.  
**Place:** USCB PAC  
**Speaker:** Dr. Craig L. Symonds, Professor of History, United States Naval Academy  
**Title:** The Battle Against the Shore: Samuel Francis DuPont and the Capture of Port Royal  
**Brief:** Dr. Symonds has taught History at the US Naval Academy since 1976. He is the only person ever to win both the Naval Academy's "Excellence in Teaching" Award and its "Excellence in Research" Award.

**Date:** February 5 4 p.m.  
**Place:** Palmetto Electric Community Room at New River Center  
**Speaker:** Dr. Emory Thomas, Regents Professor of History, University of Georgia  
**Title:** The Malleable Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in the American Mind  
**Brief:** Dr. Thomas has written extensively on United States History, producing eight books.

**Date:** February 12 4 p.m.  
**Place:** Palmetto Electric Community Room at New River Center  
**Speaker:** Dr. Carol Bleser, Kathryn and Calhoun Lemon Distinguished Professor of History, Clemson University  
**Title:** Jefferson and Varina Howell Davis: A Reappraisal of the Marriage of the President of the Confederacy  
**Brief:** A specialist in Southern history, Dr. Bleser has published several books, including outstanding edited volumes.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS..... HERE COMES ED BEARSS (PRONOUNCED BARS)**

Don't miss the Feb. 13 meeting or you will lose a very rare opportunity to watch in action one of the most unforgettable characters you will ever see. Edwin C. Bearss is colorful, entertaining and

**THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE**  
**LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE - JANUARY 2002**

a great story teller. Ed is unchallenged as the most respected and knowledgeable battlefield historian in our nation. He is the author of ten books and more than one hundred articles. As Chief Historian for the National Park Service, Ed received the Department of Interior's Distinguished Service Award, the highest award given by the department.

Bearss will talk about the first major battle of the war, First Bull Run/First Manassas. If you want to learn and be entertained while doing so, mark your calendars now.

**IMPORTANT**

**NOTE CHANGE IN DATE - JANUARY MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THIRD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16TH AT MCCRACKEN MIDDLE SCHOOL. FOR "MORNING AFTER" PROGRAM RESERVATION, CALL BOB EBERLY, 785-5393.**

**This Ends the January 2002 Issue**