

Lowcountry Civil War Roundtable

November 2002 Edition Issue 22



Our November 13th 2002 Presentation

**Battle of Port Royal "Fueling the Northern Blockade" November 7, 1861
Presented by Bill Slaughter**

To sustain and strengthen its blockade of Southern ports, the U.S. Navy needed to have a coaling, refitting, and supply station located somewhere on the southeast coast. Port Royal, SC., was considered the ideal location since it was in the strategically critical area between Charleston and Savannah. Also it was known that the Confederate garrisons at Port Royal Sound were undermanned and short of ammunition.

In late October 1861, Flag Officer Samuel F. DuPont assembled a fleet of 75 warships, with 12,000 troops in transport. Their objective was Port Royal Sound, which was guarded by an earthwork on either side of the harbor entrance—Fort Beauregard at Bay Point and Fort Walker on Hilton Head Island.

At 9:00 am on November 7, 1861, DuPont led his naval squadron into Port Royal Sound, steaming straight in between the two forts. A Confederate flotilla of four vessels could do very little to oppose the force of such superior numbers. Circling slowly, the fleet pounded the earthworks of Fort Walker, and then of Fort Beauregard. The inexperienced Southern gunners found it difficult to hit the moving targets, and the men of the U.S. Navy planted shot after shot into the forts. The Confederates fought on through the morning and into the afternoon. But between 2:00 and 3:30 pm, with their ammunition supply all but exhausted, they were forced to flee their forts and withdraw inland to

form a new line of defense. Port Royal Sound was secured as an important refueling depot for the Federal blockaders operating in the area.

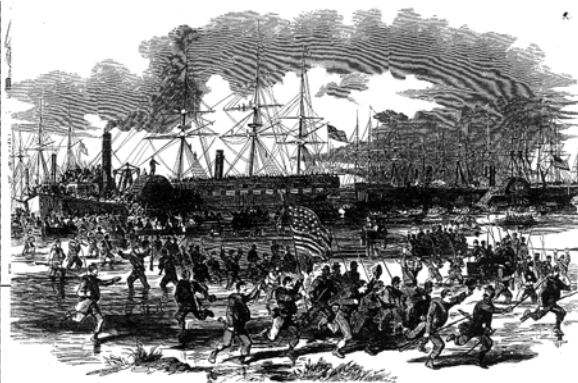
Casualties were light considering the bombardment, with 11 Confederates killed, 48 wounded, 3 captured and 4 missing. Among the Federals, 8 were killed, 6 seriously wounded, and 17 slightly wounded. The Federal vessels sustained no significant damage.

About Bill Slaughter

Bill Slaughter was born in Columbia, SC, but grew up in Macon Georgia, home of the C.S.A. Central Laboratory for Ordnance Testing and Production and the nearby Grisswoldville battlefield. He attended Emory University graduating with a BS in History. While attending

Emory he became friends with his advisor, Bell Irvin Wiley, the prominent civil war author. After a career in the computer industry, he and his wife moved to the Hilton Head Island area in 1990. In 1993, Bill began giving tours for the Coastal Discovery Museum on the historic sights in Port Royal Plantation, including Fort Walker and Fort Sherman.

He will talk tonight about the Battle of Port Royal Sound on November 7, 1861 and the subsequent military occupation of Hilton Head Island by United States Army forces through 1867. His talk will be accompanied by a slide presentation featuring photographs of camp life by Timothy O'Sullivan, Henry Moore and Samuel Cooley during the occupation.



Landing of Troops at Fort Walker

REBURIAL - MASSACUISITS TO FLORIDA

The body of Lt. Edward John Kent Johnston, CSN, will pass thru Savannah October 14th on its way home to Fernandina Beach, FL, 139 years late. Lt. Johnston, on the CSS Atlanta, was captured after a naval engagement in Wassaw Sound, near Savannah, in June 1863. He was imprisoned at Ft. Warren, in Boston Harbor, where he died of pneumonia in October 1863. He was buried in MA. His is one of the last known Confederate POW burials to be returned to his home for internment, & his body will be laid to rest beside that of his wife in Bosque Bello Cemetery in Fernandina on October 26.

The reburial, with full military honors, will be attended by his descendants as well as state officials from Florida & Massachusetts. Also in attendance will be reenactors and UDC & SCV members. There will be participants from Savannah at the ceremony.

The Trent Affair

James Mason, Confederate Commissioner to England and John Slidell, Commissioner to France, slipped through the Federal blockade on October 12, 1861 aboard CSS Theodora bound for Havana Cuba. There they boarded the Royal Mail Packet *Trent* bound for England.

On November 8, 1861 the *Trent* was intercepted by the U.S.S. *San Jacinto*. The captain, Charles Wilkes, removed Mason and Slidell and transported them to prison on Boston. This caused England's neutrality to waver and Queen Victoria demanded their release. The British halted arms and munitions shipments to the North, sent 16,000 troops to Canada, and almost decided to recognize the Confederacy. This act of buccaneering was decried by Lincoln and the men were released. They continued on to Europe.

Who knows what would have happened if the *Affair* had not been settled amicably and if then England recognized and actively supported the Confederacy.

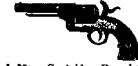


Aerial surveillance by the North. It was mainly used for mapping. This is a whole study in itself.

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January 15, 1862

On this date a letter was written by General Thomas Sherman requesting that the War Department send teachers to Port Royal, South Carolina to teach ex-slaves left on plantations that are under control of Union forces. Edward L. Pierce submitted a plan which subsequently began the Port Royal Experiment.

Duke has outdone it-
self!

Not only turkey & its
Accompaniments
but also Coffee
See menu on reservation

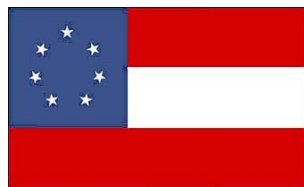


2002-2003 Presentations

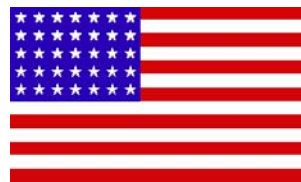
Period from 1861 to 1862

- November 13th NO MORNING AFTER FOR THIS EVENT
- January 8th Bud Robertson, a most entertaining and informative speaker, expounding on *Thomas Stonewall Jackson, The Man, The Soldier, The Legend.* **
- January 9th *Morning After Details*
 During the **MORNING AFTER** Round Table on Thursday morning, from 10-12, at the Palmetto Electric Building on Rt. #278. Call Bernie Covert 705-7808 to reserve a place.
- February 19th Edwin C Bearss, renown military expert, will discuss *Military Prisons* in the Civil War. He is an eminent preservationist and lectures throughout the country.**
- March 12th Jim Adams: *Robert E. Lee* impersonator. He will be discussing Lee's 1862 campaign strategies as he became General of the Confederate Army. **
- April 9th Speakers from the National Park Service Staff from *FORT PULASKI*, located at the mouth of the Savannah River, will discuss the importance of the Fort in 1862.
- May 14th *Stonewall Jackson and the Valley Campaign.* This will be discussed in detail by noted historian Robert Krick.**

** There will be a *Morning after* meeting for this event..



First CSA Flag in 1861



Federal Flag in 1861

November's Trivia Question

Ken Burns Trivia Question!: How many tons of supplies did Union forces under Gen. William T Sherman need every day in order to keep advancing on Atlanta in the summer of 1864?

- a. 50 b. 300 c. 600 d. 1,500

Answer on Page 8

Beaufort Library Gets Payment for Books 88 Years Overdue

In the decades before the Civil War, many of Beaufort's rice and cotton planters were rich enough to send their children to schools and colleges in Europe. The young men and women who stayed home had a respectable education in the schools of Beaufort, none the less. Beaufort College (building at 800 Carterter Street, Beaufort) had been chartered in 1795 as preparatory school, and opened as a college in 1802.

Beaufort was an exceptionally literate community. An 1857 report in *The Charleston Mercury* read that the Beaufort post office had distributed 3,460 magazines and 33,124 newspapers in just one year's time. In 1802, the prominent families of the town established the Beaufort Library Society, Beaufort's first public library (the State of South Carolina granted a charter in 1807). By 1860, the library's collection included more than 5,000 volumes, about half of which donated by Beaufortonians who had purchased them on voyages to Europe. The books covered many subjects, from government to sciences, from law to literature, and from philosophy to religion –as well as general works, like the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

In November of 1861, however, Federal troops under General Isaac

The Union does not make war on libraries

Stevens occupied Confederate Beaufort. The fleeing residents had abandoned homes, businesses -- and the town's library. Hazard Stevens, the General's son and biographer, reported that "guards were posted over a fine public library, which, however, had been thrown about in utter disorder". General Stevens added books from some private collections to the Library Society's inventory, opening the library to the Union soldiers. Stevens intended to restore the library collection to Beaufort's "inhabitants when they resumed their allegiance and returned to their homes" and rejected the demand of treasury agent Colonel William H. Reynolds for the books. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton had issued the order to seize the books for auction, and not even General William Tecumseh Sherman would assume the responsibility of having that order revoked. So General Stevens had no choice but to surrender the books.

A total of 3,182 books (in 31 crates and one bundle) arrived at the New York Customs House in November of 1862. On November 29, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* spoke for the press and public of New York City:

" A dirty deed prevented. Among the property abandoned by the rebels of Beaufort, S. C., was a considerable public library which was very properly taken charge of by the

conquerors. A few days ago the public was astonished to hear that (the library) had been sent on to this city to be sold at public auction. Thanks to Mr. William H. Fry of this city who wrote at once to the President on this subject and to the daily press which raised an unanimous voice of reprobation, the sale was stopped, and the library will be returned whenever the cessation of the war will permit it to be done in safety.

"We are not ambitious of putting ourselves on a footing with the English who burnt the archives of the government in Washington, destroyed the museum of Kertsch, and shared with the French in sacking the palace of the Emperor of China, and in burning the records of an empire that was relatively civilized when the old Colts and Britons were savages."

It was Salmon P. Chase, President Lincoln's Treasury Secretary, who immediately rescinded the order for public sale of the books. "The Union does not make war on libraries," said Chase. Secretary of War Stanton -- whose original order had started the controversy -- removed the books to the Smithsonian Institution in January of 1863. The collection occupied the upper room of the South Tower, thought to be the most secure area for storage. Indeed, the once-outraged editors of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* assured readers in on November, 1864, that "the Beaufort library is still intact, so that on the restoration of peace it can be returned to its former location". On January 24, 1865, however, two years after their placement in the Smithsonian, the entire Beaufort library's collection burned when a stove started a fire in the South Tower.

After the Civil War, several officials attempted to repay Beaufort for the loss of its library. A joint resolution by a "Mr. Butler" to the Committee on the Library failed in Washington in 1893. In 1940, Senator James F. Byrnes of South Carolina called for \$10,000 "as partial compensation", but the House did not approve his measure. Beaufort Township Librarian Mabel Runnette went to Washington in the same year; after much discussion, she arranged for Beaufort to receive proceeds from the sale of duplicate volumes from the Congressional Library to used book dealers (the deal yielded \$6,000 for the Township Library over fifteen years).

A token restitution occurred at last in 1950, when the South Carolina State Library Board secured repayment from the federal government to the Beaufort Township Library, with the aid of Senator Burnet Maybank.

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Richard McMurry's South Atlantic Civil War Symposium at Holiday Inn Oceanfront Hilton Head Island March 27 -29, 2003

Once again the Blue & Gray Education Society is presenting a Civil War Symposium on Hilton Head Island. It's not to be missed, last years symposium was terrific. Here's what you get:

10 Presentations, 3 Panel discussions, 3 Lunches, 1 Optional Tour, 1 Dinner (BGES members only)

The cost is \$288 if you register **before** February 1, 2003 or \$320 **from** February 1, 2003. You can also sign up for individual days. See the registration form for more details or call Tom Oliver (705-7217) or Bernie Covert (705-7808). The Faculty & their topics are:

Richard McMurry: Freelance historian, will speak on *Aspects of the Atlanta Campaign*

James I. "Bud" Robertson: Director, United States Naval Academy, will speak on *Old Buck, Anchor of the Navy*

Joe Glatthaar: University of Houston, will speak about *Harsh Realities, Joe Johnston and the Army of Northern Virginia to Seven Pines*

Jackie Campbell: University of Connecticut, will speak about *Fear, Fire and Fortitude: The Reality of Sherman's March through the Carolinas*

Brian Steel Wills: University of Virginia, College at Wise, will speak on *The River Ran Red with Blood, Forrest and the Fort Pillow Affair*

Stephen Wise: University of South Carolina, Beaufort, will be speaking on *The Gate of Hell*

Craig Symonds: Professor at the

will speak on *Westward Ho! The Confederates, Post War Expansion and the Native Americans*

Gail Stephens and Gloria Swift: The former is a free lance historian, the later an NPS historian at Monocacy Battlefield, they will divide a presentation on "Greater than Ben Hur--The Interesting Career of General Lew Wallace."

Cathy Barton and Dave Parr: A talented pair of folk music historians from Boonville, Missouri. They will give a musical presentation entitled *Civil War Songs from the Western Theater.*

South Atlantic Civil War Symposium Registration Form

Name: _____ Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

_____ Registration for Wednesday March 26th tour of Port Royal Sound and selected dockings **Lowcountry CWRT Members \$95 until Feb 1 then \$110; BGES members and partner organizations: \$100. General Public: \$125. This tour is optional and an additional cost.**

_____ **Pre registration for Entire Program March 27, 28 and 29, lectures, lunches, panels** (payment must be received by February 1st) *LCWRT and BGES members/partner organization members only \$ 288 Save \$87! General Public: \$320 save \$55!*

_____ **Registration for Entire Program, March 27, 28 and 29, lectures, lunches, panels** from February 1, 2003: *LCWRT only \$ 320 Save \$55! General Public: \$375*

_____ **BGES Members and partner organizations: Registration for Entire Program, March 27, 28 and 29, lectures, lunches, panels** from February 1, 2003: **\$300**

A La Carte Registrations

_____ Registration for Thursday only, March 27th Lectures, lunch, panel \$150.

_____ Registration for Friday only, March 28th Lectures, lunch, panel \$150

_____ Registration for Saturday only, March 29th Lectures, lunch, panel \$150.

_____ **BGES Annual Meeting, Saturday March 29: 5 PM, buffet BBQ, State of Society report and guest lecturer (will be announced). Dues-paying BGES members only. Must pre register by March 24th. FREE, but, donations for dinner will be gratefully accepted.**

Form of Payment:

_____ Check enclosed _____ Charge my _____ Am Express _____ VISA _____ MasterCard (circle # _____ Exp: _____

Signature: _____

You may cancel your registration with a full refund until March 21st. Your money will be refunded in full if you are not completely satisfied.

Mail this registration form to **BGES Hilton Head Symposium**, 416 Beck Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23503 or fax this form to **434-836-3292** or call Toll Free 888-741-BGES (2437)

Culinary department

The food the men of both sides ate was not something one would enlist for, even if you were destitute. Contractors, both North and South, provided, in many instances, shoddy merchandise and food. This was the first real full scale experiment with canned food. There was no FDA at that time. In future bulletins we might cover the methods of food processing and shipping during the 1860s.

The staple of the Blue's diet was hardtack, also known as *worm castles*, because it often contained extra protein in the form of worms, and *sheet-iron teeth-duller*. Both armies ate much better in camp than in the field. Bakers would provide fresh bread. Grease was ever-present, and it is surprising the armies did not keel over from strokes by 1864. The Gray's diet was heavier in corn than wheat because the latter was grown little in the South. Corn pone also became full of weevils and was often moldy, or hardened into concrete. The troops treated hardtack or pone the same, crumbling it into the bacon grease with some peas, if available, and frying the mixture until it became a glutinous mass. The name for this culinary delight was *cush*.

Soups and stews were popular items, particularly if fresh vegetables could be obtained. The Union army with its greater resources often was able to provide desiccated vegetables. These were the source of legend. Provided in dried cakes, called *bales of hay*, tales ran rife of men who'd eaten them and then exploded as the vegetables took on water and swelled in their stomach.

A legendary dish in the Grays was *Swamp Cabbage Stew*. The *swamp cabbage* was a palm variety that was felled and the heart taken to make this dish. To make, cut up salt pork into chunks, fry in cast iron pot; slice, not chop, onions and cabbage. Fry these in pot with salt pork. Add stewed tomatoes to make a stew. (Remember this will cook down so add water if necessary so it doesn't burn.) Add spices to taste. Add slowly and a little bit at a time, the taste will blend the longer it cooks. Cook at a very low heat for 4-5 hours. Taste at least once every hour so you can tell if you need more seasoning. Just hope the Fed's don't charge while tasting. Served with hush puppies or fried corn bread, this is yum yum good. This is a winner at your next tailgate party.

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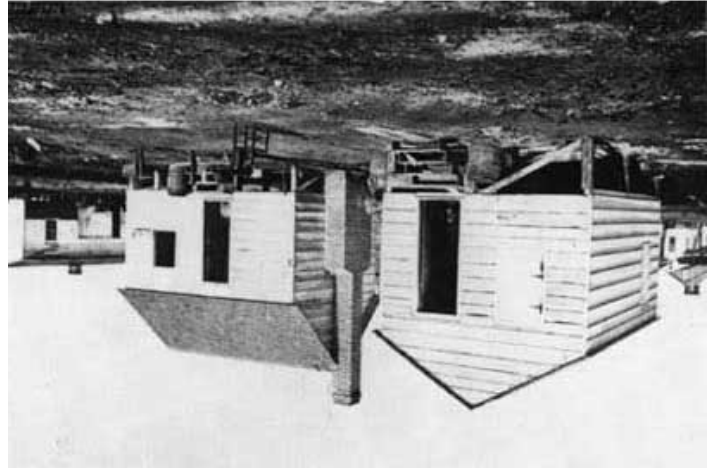
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Mitchellville about 1865, showing different kinds of houses and how the freedmen used the yard area for different activities.



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THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE
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Next Meeting
January 8th, 2003

Thomas 'stonewall' Jackson

Answer to Trivia Question
Don't Peek Until You Read Page 3

c. Every day, Union armies consumed 600 tons of ammunition, food, clothing, forage for horses and other supplies in their march on Atlanta. All of these supplies were transported over a single railroad, the Western and Atlantic, which stretched from Chattanooga to Atlanta. From the railheads, nearly 5,000 wagons were needed to distribute these supplies to the 100 - 120,000 men in Sherman's armies. As Sherman advanced, he left portions of his army behind him to guard this vital supply artery.

More on Minié Ball Name

The majority of Civil War cartridges consisted of the Minié ball and 60 grains of black powder enclosed in a paper cylinder. The paper cylinder full of powder was placed behind the bullet; both were wrapped in paper, tied off at the bullet end, and folded or twisted closed at the powder end. To load this cartridge, the soldier would bite off the folded end, pour the powder into the barrel, and squeeze the ball from the paper wrapping. He would then ram the ball with the ramrod to seat it on top of the powder. By placing a percussion cap on the nipple under the hammer, the musket was ready to fire.

The Minié ball was made primarily in .54, .58, and .69 caliber sizes, which weighed from 1 to 1 1/2 ounces. .50, .52, and .54 caliber conical projectiles were used in various breech-loading carbines. Most pistols were .36 or .44 caliber. At 600 yards, a .58 caliber Minié ball fired from a Springfield or Enfield rifled musket could penetrate six 1 inch pine boards. When it hit the human body, destruction of tissues, cartilage, vein, and bone was massive.

The soft lead flattened and broke apart as it hit flesh. If a man was hit in the arm or leg, the bullet shattered the bone from 6 to 10 inches and necessity for amputation was certain. If hit in the torso, a man was usually left to die. Doctors at the time of the Civil War knew little about mending a hole in the body that the slow moving Minié ball had made. The entrance wound was the size of a man's thumb, but the exit wound was the size of a man's fist. Human flesh has a peculiar way of "evacuating" itself from the path of a foreign object, thus literally tearing itself apart as the bullet passed through it.