

Lowcountry Civil War Round Table

April 9th 2003 Issue 26



Fort Pulaski

Presented by Talley Kirkland, Jr of the National Park Service

The Construction of Fort Pulaski

Following the War of 1812, it became apparent that the recently ravaged United States of America needed a new coastal defense system in order to protect itself from future invasion. On March 15, 1830, the United States government took control of the 150 acres originally allotted to Jonathan Bryan to be set aside for the construction of a new fort. **French Brigadier General Simon Bernard** was commissioned to select the location and design the new fort. Following numerous scouting expeditions and years of planning, construction of Fort Pulaski began in early 1829, initially overseen by an ailing **Major Samuel Babcock** of the **Army Corps of Engineers**. Babcock's failing health made it necessary



Lt. R.E. Lee

for a new West Point graduate, **Robert E. Lee** (above), to oversee the construction of the main drainage ditch, an earthen embankment and dikes, the north pier, and multiple temporary wood frame build-

ings. Following Lee's transfer and Babcock's death in 1831, **Lieutenant Joseph K.F. Mansfield** took charge of the fort's construction until near its completion in 1845.

Construction was completed in 1846. By that time America was a nation building in Mexico and had little interest (or money) for the edifice. On January 3, 1861, when a



Removing Ammo in Ft Pulaski

band of Confederate soldiers occupied the fort, only two people were stationed there.

One of the first actively targeted sites by the Union Army, Pulaski fell under siege on November 24, 1861. On April 10th, 1862, shortly after 8:00 a.m., Federal forces opened fire with rifled cannon and mortar, systematically breaching the wall.

The quick success of this experimental cannon surprised military strategists. The accuracy and range of the rifled cannon rendered brick fortifications obsolete. (See letter on Page 6). Immediately after capturing the fort, Union Major General David Hunter, an ar-



Count Pulaski

dent abolitionist, ordered the release of area slaves. Many were recruited into the Union army comprising the First South Carolina Colored Regiment.

Brief Description of The Park

The park includes 5,623 acres of scenic marsh and uplands that support a variety of animal life characteristic of southern barrier islands. White-tailed deer, alligators, and raccoons as well as resident and migratory birds grace the landscape. Spanish moss drapes from yaupon holly bushes and vegetation includes cabbage palms, various wetland grasses, and a variety of temperate hardwood and pine trees.

Talley Kirkland Jr. has over 33 years of experience with the National Park Service at Fort Pulaski.



Picture of Current Fort Pulaski

GODS AND GENERALS

It has been a while since one picture has raised so much controversy. The good and bad reviews range over the gamut from photographic techniques, historical accuracy and length of the film. We selected a few comments either received by this bulletin or placed on the Internet.

The Editors.

... film captured the terrible conditions of war quite well. ... I certainly encourage seeing this excellent movie. **Don Walters**

...Kay and I enjoyed it ...glad we went. I think it portrayed fairly accurately Jackson and Lee's character. It also was probably accurate regarding the events of 61 and 62. It won't be on the big screen very long but will turn into one of those movie that summarize a period of time from a historical point of view. **Tom Oliver**

...thought the movie was absolutely terrible. ...I can't believe that Jackson would salute back the slave Jim who saluted him as if he were in the Confederate army. Jackson's conversations with him about mail from home seemed equally absurd when one considers that it was against the law to teach blacks to read and write. [Note: Jim was a freed Black. Ed]. As far as the acting and dialog went, it was terrible. The dialog seemed stale and artificial. Stuart's beard appeared really artificial. And the heavenly music every time Jackson appeared or uttered a word! Fine if we want to portray Saint Peter, but Jackson? Absolutely unbelievable. ... **Walt Hartung**

...the movie should be commended for its authenticity. ... could have done without the scene in which Jackson and his black cook pray together... I think it grossly unfair to compare it to **Gettysburg**. G&G tells the story of the war over a two year time span while **Gettysburg** takes place in five days. **Johanna Verwer**

Despite its flaws, a fine effort worthy of support....The story line and characters are evocative and meaningful for those of us who already know the story and share the filmmaker's passion for history. To we "Civil War buffs", Jackson, Lee and Chamberlain and the others are already iconographic. Seeing them brought to life with such flair was fulfillment enough, as we automatically fill in the blanks from our knowledge of the story. However, I question whether the feature-length film will resonate with the general viewing public the way it could have-- **Kathryn Coombs, February 21, 2003**

Ed. All were edited. I can provide additional links in the future.

THE MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE
Lowcountry Civil War Round Table Inc.
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Dedicated to Historic Preservation and Enlightenment



A New Cartridge Revolver,
 Cavalry Use Both Old and New. - 1862
 A. S. WELCH & CO. NEW YORK

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2002-2003 PRESENTATIONS

PERIOD FROM 1861 TO 1862

April 9th

Fort Pulaski: There is **NO** morning after.

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..



COMING IN 2003-2004

(subject to change)

CIVIL WAR WOMEN
BATTLE OF SHILOH
THE WESTERN CAMPAIGN
MEDICINE DURING THE CIVIL WAR

2ND MANASSAS/BULL RUN
CIVIL WAR WEAPONRY
ANTIETAM
THE SEVEN DAYS BATTLE

Confederate Passover

Adams Run, South Carolina April 24th, 1864

Dear Leonora,

No doubt you were much surprised on receiving a letter from me addressed to our dear parents dated on the 21st which was the first day of חספ [Pesach]. [Orthodox Jews are prohibited from writing on Sabbath or a festival] We were all under the impression in camp that the first day of the festival was the 22nd and if my memory serves me right I think that Ma wrote me that Pesach was on the 22nd inst. Zeke [Isaac's brother Capt. Ezekiel J. Levy of the 46th VA] was somewhat astonished on arriving in Charleston on Wednesday afternoon, to learn that that was the first רדס [Seder] night. He purchased תוצמ [Matzos] sufficient to last us for the week. The cost is somewhat less than in Richmond, being but two dollars per pound. [Matzos in New York City was then 6 cents a pound.]



We are observing the festival in a truly Orthodox style. On the first day we had a fine vegetable soup. It was made of a bunch of vegetables which Zeke brought from Charleston containing new onions, parsley, carrots turnips and a young cauliflower also a pound and a half of fresh [kosher] beef, the latter article sells for four dollars per pound in Charleston. Zeke E. did not bring us any meat from home. He brought some of his own, smoked meat, which he is sharing with us, he says that he supposes that Pa forgot to deliver it to him.

No news in the section at present. Troops from Florida are passing over the road en route for Richmond. 'Its probable that we will remain in this department and were it not for the unhealthy season which is approaching, would be well satisfied to remain here. Love to all, Isaac J. Levy

Isaac J. Levy was killed in the trenches at Petersburg, August 21, 1864. He was 21 years old. Isaac is buried in the Hebrew Cemetery on Shockoe Hill in Richmond, in the Levy family plot. The original letter is on file in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

April's Trivia Question

How many presidents hired substitutes to serve in their place in the Civil War?

Answer on Page 8

Twas The Morning After

On Thursday, March 13th, about 20 members enjoyed a very educational discussion of R.E. Lee, other personages, as well as *Gods & Generals*. Jim Adams displayed his voluminous knowledge of not only Lee but his family, Jackson, and many other prominent figures and events. The events covered education at West Point, speculation as to *what ifs*, Lee's acceptance as a *saintly* figure by many of the Southern population, and his final desire to have all rejoin the Union.



Bernie Covert & Jim Adams
(R.E. Lee)

In addition, Bernie provided an excellent array of pastries, coffee and fruits. Since the *morning after* it included in your membership, it would be to all members advantage to attend these meetings. They allow us to go into greater depth regarding the previous evening's presentation. Also, the question and answer period is more extensive since a very close relationship is accomplished via the clustering of the chairs and tables.

Everyone should try to take advantage of this part of your *Roundtable*.

Imprisonment of the Immortal 600

Fort Pulaski - January 1865

On August 20, 1864, a chosen group of 600 Confederate officer prisoners of war were transferred from their interment at Fort Delaware Prison, to Federally occupied Hilton Head, South Carolina. The purpose of this move was to place these men into a cramped stockade in front of Union artillery positions, to literally use these prisoners as human shields from the bombarding of the Confederate artillery of Charleston Harbor.



'600's Burial at Ft Pulaski

The 600 prisoners were landed on Morris Island, at the mouth of Charleston Harbor. There they remained, in an open 1 1/2 acre pen, under the shelling of friendly artillery fire. Three died

on the starvation rations issued as a retaliation for the conditions of the Union prisoners held at Andersonville, Georgia and Salisbury, North Carolina.

On October 21, after 45 days under fire, the weakened survivors were removed to Fort Pulaski. Here they were crowded into the cold, damp casemates of the fort. On November 19, an attempt to relieve overcrowding was made by sending 197 of the men back to Hilton Head. For 42 days, a "retaliation ration" of 10 ounces of moldy cornmeal and soured onion pick-

les was the only food issued to the prisoners. Thirteen men died at Fort Pulaski, and five died at Hilton Head.

The remaining prisoners to survive, were returned to Fort Delaware on March 12, 1865, where an additional twenty-five died. *The Immortal Six-Hundred* became famous throughout the South for their adherence to principle, refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance under such adverse circumstances.

However

The inability of Union forces to overtake cities such as Charleston proved immensely frustrating, leading Union leaders such as Quincy A. Gillmore and J.G. Foster to continually bomb the city. With **Union General William Tecumseh Sherman's** impending arrival at various ports throughout coastal Georgia and South Carolina, Confederate leaders began to devise new ways to prevent the shelling of the cities in these areas.

General Samuel Jones reluctantly housed two separate groups of Federal prisoners within the city limits of Charleston, South Carolina, in hopes this would discourage Union shelling. This began a dangerous game of *tit-for-tat*, with **Union General J.G. Foster** requesting equal amounts of Confederate prisoners from Fort Delaware to be placed on the beach in front of Union guns at Fort Sumter on Morris Island, South Carolina. The second group consisted of 600 Confederate officers. These 600 men eventually came to be known as *The Immortal 600*.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING

Change In Bylaws

The Executive Committee has reorganized the duties of the Membership Committee and formed a separate Dinner Committee. This new committee is a standing committee and the chairperson a member of the Executive Committee. This requires a change to Article V, Section 2 of the Bylaws.

The proposed change is shown below. *We will vote on it at the April 9th meeting.*

Current Bylaws

ARTICLE V

Executive Committee

Section 2. Committees

1. Standing Committees

(a) Nominating Committee: The At-Large Member shall serve as chairperson of the Nominating Committee. The immediate past president shall serve on the Nominating Committee. The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to solicit and submit a list of nominations for all the offices listed in Article VIII (and for the At-Large position referenced in Section 1 of this Article) prior to the annual meeting of members.

(b) Membership Committee: The purpose of the Membership Committee is to maintain a list of all current members of the Round Table, to conduct the annual members' reenlistment campaign, and to perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Executive Committee.

(c) Program Committee: The purpose of the Program Committee is to secure speakers for the Round Table's monthly meetings, and to perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Executive Committee.

(d) Communication Committee: The purpose of the Communication Committee is to write a monthly newsletter and to perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Executive Committee.

(e) Hospitality Committee: The purpose of the Hospitality Committee is to greet and assist members of the Round Table at the monthly meetings and to perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Executive Committee.

Proposed NEW Bylaws

ARTICLE V

Executive Committee

Section 2. Committees

1. Standing Committees

(a) Nominating Committee: **No change from above**

(b) Membership Committee: **No change from above**

(c) Program Committee: **No change from above**

(d) Communication Committee: **No change from above**

(e) Hospitality Committee: **No change from above**

ADD THE FOLLOWING

(f) Dinner Committee: The purpose of the Dinner Committee is to receive and process meeting and dinner reservations, work with the caterer and the meeting facility personnel to ensure that for each meeting the facility is available and properly set up, the menu is selected and the caterer is prepared to serve the dinner.

A Letter From the Front Lines

The following letter is from a Michigan soldier with his impressions of the attack on Fort Pulaski. Words in italics are as is.

Goats Point Tybee Island G.A.

April 27th 1862

Dear Sister For a long time I have *deferred* writing to you in hopes that I might get a letter from you before I wrote but I guess I will have to write notwithstanding and let you know what I am doing. I am well--you will notice that we have left Beaufort. We are now under the walls of that long dreaded Fort called Pulaski and although the Fort is ours with the loss of but very few men, yet today I witnessed a scene which might bring tears of pity to the eye if the *hart* were hard as stone. It was this--yesterday seven companies of our Rgt were ordered to go over on Wilmington Island, and *reconolter*. They prepared to go immediately and were soon on board the Transport Honduras. Our company was ordered to go but the order was *counterrnanded*, and we were left to guard the batteries here on Tybee when all at once I was aroused by the unusual noise in the tent, and one of the boys told me that Warren ? was wounded and wanted to see me. I sprang to my feet and *huried* on *bord* the Transport and a revolting scene met my gaze. There lay 11 mangled ghastly forms, cold in death and a little to one side lay 38 more on the deck wounded. I looked around and found Warren among them. He grasped my hand and O how glad he was to see me. I found he was not mortally wounded. He had received a very bad flesh wound in the thigh from a bullet. No bones were broken. He appeared to be in good spirits and I think with good care, he will soon recover. I did not see him but a few minutes for the Boat was soon on her way to Hilton Head with the dead and wounded.

We suppose as near as we can find out that the Rebels numbered about 800--they were a Regt of G.A. Sharp Shooters. Our force did not exceed 200 but the Rebels had to retreat. I think we will soon go over again and when we go next time, we will try and take something more than a few skirmishers. Note I have given you a brief acct. of the more recent occurrences--so I will go back to the time when we left Beaufort and tell you what happened from the time up to the time of the fight which I have just described. A little more than two weeks ago while on Brigade drill, one day we were ordered to our quarters and to prepare for a march at once. We packed our knapsacks, and in less than an hour, we were on board the Transport Steamer Bendeford and on our way for Tybee Island. We were to guard the land Bat-



teries on Tybee. We lay on the Transport that night (Apr. 9th) and the next morning she steamed up to a point on Tybee. Almost in range of Pulaski. No sooner did the men at the Batteries see us wheel up to the point that they opened on the Fort. The shot was answered and another went whirling on its death errand--we landed as soon as possible and remained under arms all day at the *Mortello* Tower (I will finish this when I get there).

Apr. 10th we are now in Beaufort so I will finish my letter. The Bombarding was kept up and as soon as it was dark, we changed our position from the Tower, to within 7/8 of a mile of the Fort. We took our position quietly *nusling* our knapsacks, and lay down to rest--what little we could, but we were not allowed to rest for long for I had scarcely got to sleep, when all at once the tremendous roar of Cannon broke on my ear and the ground trembled and shook as with an earth quake and from that time till morning the sky was continually lit up with the ? of Mortars and the whirling blue of flying bombs--it was a splendid sight as I ever saw--all night I lay there and watched those *firey* messengers travel up along the sky and listen to the roar as they exploded in that infernal old nest Pulaski--as soon as day dawned, our batteries opened from every point and the Ft. which had remained silent all night was again enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke.

I soon saw on the second day that a breach began to show in the wall, and grow larger and larger. I had a good glass and could mark the result of every shot. It was fun to see the brick dust fly. By three o'clock P.M. the hole in the wall had become amazingly large, and at 4 P.M. the Rebel rag came down and up went the white flag and before the sun had set in the west, the stars and stripes were floating over the long dreaded walls of Ft. Pulaski. We took 370 Prisoners and all the guns--*amunition* in the Ft. and strange to say there was but one man killed on our side, and but if the truth were known, they lost a great many more than they were willing to own. One of the wounded Rebels said when he was *dieing* that if we would look in the ditch *arround* the Ft. we could find a good many bodies thrown in--to deceive us in regard to the No. killed--as soon as they surrendered, we moved up to Goats Point where I was when I commenced this letter.

I am your Affectionate brother.

Emmett Cole was in Company F., 8th Michigan Infantry

JOIN THE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

If you are interested in doing a little detective work, learning more about the Civil War history of the Lowcountry and helping with the preservation of Civil War military sites, then you are someone who should join the Lowcountry Civil War Roundtable's newest committee. Mike Taylor, Director of the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust and Roundtable member, is looking for volunteers for the Roundtable's new Preservation Committee. There will be no ex-

(Continued on page 7 Join)

**RESERVATION FOR APRIL 9TH MEETING
AT McCracken Middle School
DINNER @ 5:45PM – PROGRAM @ 7:00PM**

**MENU FOR APRIL 9, 2003
FRIED CHICKEN • HAM
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Dinner For April 9th, 2003

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(Join-Continued from page 6)

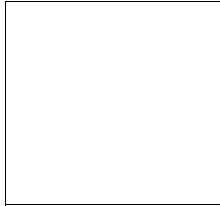
pense for the members of the Preservation Committee, so if you want to help with this worthwhile and enjoyable effort please contact Mike Taylor at PO Box 21781, Hilton Head Island, SC 29925 or call him at 689-3223. Mike will be at our April meeting to tell us more about the committee and the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust.

The first goal of the committee will be to compile a catalog of existing Civil War sites located in Beaufort County. The research effort will focus on forts, batteries, gun emplacements, trenchlines and other earthwork fortifications. The list will contain information on the history of each site, location, ownership, condition and endangered status. This information is publicly available but has not been gathered into one comprehensive document.

<i>LCWRT Statistics as of 3/15/03</i>	
Total Members	470
New for 2002-2003	148
Mar 12 th Dinners Served	185
Mar 12 th Non Dinner	70
<i>Morning After</i> Mar 13 th	20
Web Site Hits for Feb '03	4529



Gen Longstreet from Gods & Generals



THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE
Lowcountry Civil War Round Table Inc.
P.O. Box 2252
Bluffton, SC 29910



**NEXT MEETING
MAY 14TH, 2003
STONEWALL JACKSON AND THE VAL-
LEY CAMPAIGN.
THIS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL
BY NOTED HISTORIAN ROBERT KRICK**

**WELCOME NEW
MEMBERS!
PLEASE TELL YOUR
FRIENDS ABOUT
YOUR ROUNDTABLE**

Trivia Answer Don't Peek

Two. Grover Cleveland, 22nd president avoided military service by hiring a 32 year old Polish immigrant, George Beninsky for \$150 to serve in his behalf. *DeGregorio, Presidents, 323*
John S Staples of Strudburg Pa was recruited by the District of Columbia Provost Marshall, James B Fry, to be a *representative recruit* for President Abraham Lincoln. Staples, a carpenter from Ohio, was paid an extraordinary \$500 for his serving. *Miers, Lincoln, 3:286*

Our Web Site lowcountrycwr.org
Civil War Sites of Interest
Visit this fantastic web site for a plethora of information on the Civil War which has many excerpts from the famous *War of Rebellion* series.
<http://www.civilwarhome.com/records.htm>