



MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

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

April 8, 2019

Dear LCWRT members:

I have received three essays re the Keller Family Scholarship “contest.” Two are on “The Naval Battle of Port Royal” and the other on “The Underground Railroad in S.C.” These are in the process of being graded, and the winner will be notified on May 1, 2019; the membership at our May presentation.

Our “50-50” drawing appears to be popular. Last month we were able to provide the winner with \$60; the month before, \$100. We will continue this and also ask that you each donate to our scholarship fund. You can do the “50-50” and the scholarship donation at the same table.

Thank you for providing your CAM numbers. These have been requested by LifeStyles, and as of this date we have all but approximately 45 “unknown” numbers. If you have not given your number, please consider doing so at our meeting on April 24; LifeStyles has given us a date of May 1, 2019, to comply.

Abraham Lincoln was shot on April 14, 1865, at 10:15 p.m. He was carried across the street and laid diagonally on a bed – his six-foot four-inch” frame necessitated this! He died at 7:22 a.m. on April 15, 1865. When he died someone emptied his pockets and contents were placed in a box and wrapped with brown paper and tied with a string. This was given to his eldest son, Robert, who passed it on eventually to his daughter, Mary Lincoln Isham. This was donated to the Library of Congress in 1937 and labeled “Do Not Open.” In 1975 it was opened and the contents were: ivory pocketknife trimmed in silver; spectacles folded in a silver case; white linen handkerchief with “A Lincoln” stitched in red; a tiny pencil; a fancy watch fob; a sleeve button; small piece of velvet glass cleaner; a second pair of reading glasses; a five-dollar Confederate bill and a leather wallet with eight newspaper clippings praising him.

Henry Rathbone and his fiancé, Clara Harris, accompanied the Lincolns to Ford’s Theatre and Henry eventually married Clara and they had three children. Henry threatened the children in Germany in 1883 and killed Clara. He was declared criminally insane and confined to an asylum for the rest of his life. Mary Todd Lincoln was confined to a sanitarium in 1875.

Potpourri: “JEEP” - in 1941 the U.S. government commenced manufacturing small vehicles ostensibly for the war effort. These were referred to as General Purpose vehicles and usage, verbally and written, became shortened to “GP.”

Thank you for your continued support.

Michael Sweeney, President
LCWRT

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The Archaeology of Civil War Naval Operations in Port Royal Sound during the Civil War.

Featuring Jim Spirek

Jim Spirek is the State Underwater Archaeologist and has been with the Institute since 1996, and in his current position since 2012, Jim's responsibilities include managing and studying the maritime archaeological legacy residing in the lakes, rivers and coastal waters of South Carolina. Much of his research has been devoted to documenting archaeological features associated with Civil War naval operations in state waters, primarily at Port Royal Sound, Winyah Bay, ACE Basin, and Charleston Harbor. Jim has directed or participated in the investigations of the *H.L. Hunley* - USS *Housatonic* Naval Engagement site, the Stone Fleets off Charleston, recovery of the CSS *Pee Dee* cannons, blockade runners, and other naval casualties from the conflict. Jim received his B.A. in History from George Mason University in 1987 and his M.A. in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology from East Carolina University in 1993.

Following the victory at Port Royal Sound in early No. 1861, Union military forces quickly consolidated control of the interior waters and adjacent sea islands. With the Confederates controlling the mainland and the important Charleston and Savannah Railroad the region settled into a stalemate between the opposing forces, although punctuated with outbursts of battle, until Southern defenses were abandoned in the beginning of 1865. In the meantime, Union forces developed the logistical infrastructure necessary to support and launch offensive operations along the southeastern coastline. The sound also became the headquarters and logistical base of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron needed to maintain the blockade and to participate in combined operations with the army. Despite the use of army and naval gunboats and transports during the various battles in the upper reaches of the sound, the Union military only suffered one naval battlefield casualty, the Army gunboat, USS *George Washington*, destroyed by a Confederate land battery in the spring of 1863. Other Union shipwrecks in the sound were vessels used for logistical support and abandoned during the war. These included several vessels intended to obstruct the navigation channels at Savannah and Charleston, but instead two were diverted to create a Floating Machine Shop, to repair warships, and a few others as floating store ships for the navy and army. One of these vessels also sank after striking the shoals at the entrance to the sound. The illustrated presentation will provide an overview of the historical development and archaeological consequences of the loss of the gunboat *George Washington* and of the infrastructure necessary to support the blockade and combined operations along the southeastern coastline by Union military forces. Additionally, the talk will also focus on the terminus of the southern defensive arc with the archaeological investigations of the remains of the CSS *Georgia*, recently recovered from the Savannah River.

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Battle of Port Royal

November 7, 1861

Three days after the fall of Fort Sumter in April 1861, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a blockade of all Southern ports. At the start of the Civil War, the present **Port Royal Plantation** was occupied by Confederate forces. Fort Walker was built in a hurry by Confederate soldiers to help protect the critical southern ports of Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah. (Fort Walker was the first fort built on the island, near the spot claimed by British Captain William Hilton during its famous expedition in 1663.)

Later in 1861, Union forces successfully attacked and captured the fort during the Battle of Port Royal Sound. They gained a strategic foothold to aid the Union blockade of the ports. That same day occupying Union soldiers freed over 1,000 island slaves. They were the first slaves freed by the Civil War.

In the Battle of Port Royal, the Confederate troops were defeated, and 13,000 Union troops landed to take control of the Island. A town quickly sprang up from the military presence, including restaurants, a theater, stores, a newspaper and saloons along the main street known as "Robbers Row."

Historical markers at **Fort Walker Park**, the **Beach House** and the **Steam Gun** (remnants of a large cannon that was operated by pressurized air) describe events that took place here and in the surrounding waters. An Earthworks installation known as **Fort Sherman** (built on top of Fort Walker) was constructed in 1862 and is widely intact today. The Union's Department of the South was headquartered there, and between 1862 and 1865, about 50,000 Union troops passed through the Plantation. Hilton Head Island has the remnants of four Civil War forts. Today, all that remains are earthworks and numerous interpretive markers.

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Swashbuckling Pirates in the Lowcountry

"Shiver me timbers, shiver my soul, yo ho he ho. There are men whose hearts as black as coal." —
18th century nautical slang

By Caroline Wallace Kennedy

Ahoy, ye dirty land lovers. Hoist the Jolly Roger flag and join me for a look into the dirty scalawags who used to visit these shores. Yee will bow to me or walk the plank! Arrrggh, Matey!

Shiver me timbers! Years ago the waters of the Carolinas were infested with hundreds of pirates that sailed the waters of the Atlantic because of their nearness to Bermuda and the West Indies. Most American pirates began by being legal wartime privateers, because of a weak government during political trouble. The waters off our shores have been host to some of the most dramatic seafaring criminals when pirates, privateers, and naval raiders plied the Carolina waters during the American colonial period (1670 to 1740) making it to be known as the "Pirate's Trail."

The rogues of legends and in real life in the first quarter of the 18th century produced some of the most outrageous characters and successful pirates of all time. There was more to Blackbeard, Black

Sam, Calico Jack, Charles Vane, Stede Bonnet, and women pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Read, than pirate songs, buried treasure, and fluttering pirate flags.

The city of "Charles Town" was founded in 1670 in honor of King Charles II of England and adopted its present name of "Charleston" in 1783. From its earliest days, it was vulnerable to seafaring criminals such as Blackbeard who performed daring exploits. (Some say his ghost is still there in the harbor.) The people of Charles Town enjoyed a cozy relationship with the pirates since they spent lavishly while in port, and they could buy their black market goods at low prices. Some officials thought these dealings were good for the economy, but the British government began recalling governors who were linked too closely with the pirates. The towns' people realized that safe sea-lanes were *more* important than bargains.

In the early 18th century, fellow pirates founded a government in the Bahamas with the violent Blackbeard setting himself up as magistrate. Because New Providence's harbor was close to the Florida Strait, it became a nesting place for pirates preying on trade routes and kept Europe from its ties to the New World.

The Most Feared Pirate in the Caribbean and the East Coast

Edward Teach (alias Blackbeard) from England was considered a heartless scalawag and struck terror into the hearts of all he met. He stood six-feet 5-inches tall with an extravagant black beard, which he plaited in little tails and tied with ribbons. He wore a sling over his shoulders that held three pistols, along with daggers and a cutlass short sword, and tucked low-burning hemp cord that smoked under his hat on each side of his face. No ships were safe from his bloodthirsty desire to take prizes along the Atlantic Coast and the Caribbean. He only needed to raise his flag — depicting a skeleton spearing a heart while toasting the devil — to get captains to surrender without a shot.

Once, he commandeered a Spanish galleon off the coast of Eleuthera and found a cache of wine, and a ton of gold. The crew steered the ship to a safe harbor and opened a few bottles of wine to celebrate. What they didn't know was the wine had been fermented with cocoa leaves and was laced with cocaine. All of a sudden the crew was *no* longer tired — the potent brew making them feel they were the strongest men alive. When the sun rose the next morning only three men were alive. The survivors blamed the Spanish **cursed** brew, and made a pact to never drink wine, or to never pour it on the deck as they had done before to bring good luck.

Blackbeard arrived in the Carolinas in 1718, commanding one of the most powerful pirates

fleets in history with 400 men on four ships, including his 40 cannon-studded flagship, *Queen Anne's Revenge* that he decorated with his victims' bones. Blackbeard held Charles Town hostage, capturing four ships, and ransacked nine. A ship headed for London with prominent citizens on board was stopped, and the passengers held hostage. Blackbeard told the officials he needed medical supplies, and if not delivered, the prisoners would be executed, and all ships burnt. Finally, the governor agreed and the supplies arrived. Blackbeard released the prisoners and the ships and all of their valuables. (Shortly after Blackbeard ran the *Queen Anne's Revenge* aground while entering the Beaufort Inlet, and transferred supplies onto a smaller ship, the *Adventure*.)

Governor Spottswood of Virginia offered a reward of 100 pounds for his capture, and sent English Navy Lieutenant Robert Maynard, of the *HMS Jane*, to sail from Hampton Roads with two other ships. Maynard thought Blackbeard was near Ocracoke Island (now known as Teach's Hole). Blackbeard received news late one day that Maynard was on his way. Because of the dangerous shoals, he was afraid to sail the *Adventure* in the dark, but planned to escape at first light. He stayed up all night drinking rum, and pacing the deck, hoping that daylight would come *before* Maynard. When one of his men asked whether his wife knew where he'd buried his money, "Nobody but meself and the Devil know where it is, and the longest "liver" should take all." With the arrival of dawn, it was too late.

With little wind in the sound, Maynard's ships ran aground on a sandbar, and his men had to row toward the *Adventure*. Quickly, Blackbeard's crew cut the anchor cable and headed for open water. Maynard's men forced the *Adventure* to run aground with a fierce gun battle. When the smoke cleared, Blackbeard saw that Maynard had ordered all but two of his men below. As he boarded the *Jane* Maynard's men rushed from below deck, and entered into a terrific sword fight, ending with Maynard throwing away his bent sword and firing his pistol wounding Blackbeard. Another officer named Demelt engaged Blackbeard with his sword slashing his neck. Blackbeard said, "Well done lad." Demelt replied, "If it not be well done, I'll do it better." With that, he quickly cut off Blackbeard's head watching as his remains were tossed overboard. It's said that swallows and gulls filled the sky. Sailors thought seabirds carried the souls of dead sailors. The scourge of the Atlantic seaboard was dead! His gold hoop earrings and tattoos that he wore to ward off evil spirits did not bring him **good** luck that day.

Maynard, affixed Blackbeard's head to the bowsprit and sailed to Bath, where Blackbeard lived. Blackbeard's surviving crew was brought to Williamsburg where they were executed with their bodies hanging in metal cages along the roads. Blackbeard's severed head was suspended from a pole on the Hampton River at a place now known as Blackbeard's Point. (It is believed that Blackbeard's friends stole the skull from atop the pole and had it silver-plated.)

It was said that the bloodthirsty pirate loaded his yawl boat with treasure and explored the meandering rivers picking a place called Jake's Hole and dropped an oak chest bound with copper bands in, and left man-eating red herring to guard the booty. Many tried to retrieve the treasure with ropes and grappling irons. It was easy to catch hold of it, but as soon as they got it near the surface, the ropes would burst into flames and burn with an awful stink of sulfur, while the chest sank back to the bottom.

Another tale said that after he was beheaded, his body was tossed to the fishes, and when his body hit the water the head began to call, "Come on, Edward!" whereupon the headless body swam around the ship three times before sinking to the bottom to "Davy Joneses Locker." (Davy Jones, according to the mythology of sailors, is the barbarian that presides over all the evil spirits of the deep the evil spirit of the sea.)

Robert Louis Stevenson references him in many works including *Treasure Island*. Blackbeard mystique makes him one of the most colorful cutthroats to scour the seas and local waters — the most notorious pirate of all time, even though his career only lasted two years.

Women On-board a Ship Distract the Crew

Anne Bonney was born in County Cork, Ireland around 1700, the daughter of a maid, and her employer, lawyer William Cormac. When Cormac's wife discovered the affair, the couple fled with young Anne and sailed across the Atlantic, to settle in Charles Town. Years later Anne, being a determined teenager, ran away with a penniless sailor named James Bonny. Her father disowned her. They fled to New Providence where James became a stool pigeon to the governor. Anne tired of him, preferring to sleep around with the island's notorious pirates. Soon she caught the eye of a rivetingly pirate named "Calico Jack" Rackman (his bright calico pants earned him the nickname). Calico Jack had just commandeered a ship full of liquor from his former boss, pirate Charles Vane.

Anne ran away with Calico Jack on a stolen sloop named *William* and joined his crew, disguised as a man. She became a daring fighter who dressed like a man, and fought, drank and swore like one too. When she became pregnant thus adding to the melodrama, and Calico Jack insisted that she leave the baby with a Cuban family. Then they sailed to the Carolinas, where they knew that the governor was friendly to pirates. (A child born on a ship was considered good luck and is where the term "Son of a Gun" comes from.)

She enjoyed success on the raids with Calico Jack, and also Jack's lieutenant they picked up in the

Carolinas, with whom she developed a lusty attraction. “He” turned out to be a woman named Mary Read who had spent her entire childhood portraying a boy. Both women became known as bloodthirsty pirates wearing women's clothing onboard, but changed into men's clothes to fight — fighting with more courage than the men.

Calico Jack and his crew stole a merchant vessel in the Bahamas and sailed it to Jamaica, so the governor sent recovery ships to capture them. One of the ships captured Calico Jack and crew who were drunk from one too many bottles of rum in a harbor near Port Royal, Jamaica. The men were swiftly found guilty convicted and hanged. Calico Jack's body was gibbeted in chains from a gallows-type structure on a coral reef at the entrance to Deadman's Cay. (Pirates would knock on the wood hull of their ships to listen for worms or rot. Hearing a solid sound would imply that the hull was in “ship shape.” “Knock on Wood,” meant their wooden hull would hold fast and true during their voyage. They also believed that women onboard meant bad luck for the crew. This proved to be true with the women onboard.) Anne Bonny, believed her husband to be a coward, and when she attended his execution she said of her former superhero, "If he'd fought like a man, he need not have been hanged like a dog."

The dreaded female pirates pleaded that they could not be hanged because they were pregnant, which was true, and they were allowed to live until the babies were born. Read and her unborn child died of a fever in prison in Jamaica. Anne Bonny was *not* executed — she simply vanished. One story says her wealthy father paid her ransom and brought her back to the Carolinas. Many young girls of the Victorian Era saw Anne Bonny as a great heroine in a time when women were kept indoors, banned from freedoms that men enjoyed.

The world has been in love with swashbuckling pirates since Douglas Fairbanks Sr. who played a nobleman who becomes a pirate to avenge his father's death, with stunning sword fights, buried treasure and heated romance in *The Black Pirate* in 1926 and the exuberant *Sindbad the Sailor* in 1947. Errol Flynn followed him with his dashing good looks and devilish grin in *Captain Blood*, which made him a major star and the successor to Fairbanks, to the current five Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* film series with Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom.

Blimey! When walking the beach after a storm keep your eyes on the sand. You never know when the Devil's Triangle will release one of its treasures.

Sources: *Ocracoke* by Carl Goerch - 1956, <http://consejo.bz/Pirates>, <http://www.republicofpirates.net>

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2019 Lecture Series for the LCWRT

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May 22, 2019	Ron Roth	“Underground Railroad”
Sept. 26, 2019	Jack Rabbitt	“Jews in the Civil War”
Oct. 24, 2019	Richard Murray	“Atlanta Campaign”

We will meet in Magnolia Hall in Sun City every month.

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LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE, INC.
MEMBERSHIP FORM
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PERIOD to AUG. 31, 2019

Please **Print** All Information Below

Last Name First Name Badge Nickname

Additional Household Member Last Name First Name Badge Nickname

Address: _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____
Phone () _____
E-Mail: _____

(We will keep this confidential!)

CURRENT MEMBER _____ NEW MEMBER _____

Household: Annual Membership (to Aug 31, 2018): \$40.00

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

Mail to or leave in "lower" box: **Joseph Passiment, 26 Schooner Lane, Bluffton, SC 29909-4305**

Make Check Payable to: **LCWRT Inc.** Any questions, please call **Joseph Passiment** at **732-995-2102**

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MINI É BALL GAZETTE

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