



# MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

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

## November/December 2021 issue

### December 6, 2021 at Hidden Cypress Ballroom

Please note this is a change of date from our previous schedule!

For the present, our meetings will be in person and guest fees will only be \$5, so this will be a good time to invite your friends to join us at our meeting.

### C. Russell Horres on “Morris Island and the Civil War”

Due to Thanksgiving, our November meeting will be held in early December. Russel Horres is a native of Charleston and currently resides in Mount Pleasant. He has been a volunteer research and interpretative guide for the National Park Service since 2001. His work with the National Park Service has led to the discovery of long-lost records of the construction of Fort Sumter. He is the author of *Morris Island and the Civil War Strategy and Influence*.

Morris Island held a critical position in the Civil War. It was first used by the Confederates in the bombardment of Ft. Sumter and Charleston. Then the roles were reversed and the Union forces used the site to also bombard Ft. Sumter and Charleston. Both sides expended a vast amount of money for what appeared to be of little value.

Morris Island is an 840-acre (3.4 km<sup>2</sup>) uninhabited island in Charleston Harbor in South Carolina, accessible only by boat. The island lies in the outer reaches of the harbor and was thus a strategic location in the American Civil War. The island is part of the cities of Charleston and Folly Beach, in Charleston County.

#### ***Morris Island and the Civil War Strategy and Influence***

Available from Amazon Kindle \$12.99

Paperback \$19.83

From Charleston's doorstep, Morris Island held a critical position in the Civil War. It was first used by Confederates to assist in the bombardment of Fort Sumter and later became the scene of an epic struggle to prevent Union forces from gaining control. After the battle, the roles reversed, and Union forces used the site to bombard Fort Sumter and Charleston. Hundreds lost their lives, and both sides expended a vast amount of war capital for what appeared to be

little value. Confederates greatly underestimated how events at Morris Island played into the hands of the Civil War's master strategist, Abraham Lincoln. Author C. Russell Horres Jr. offers the complete story of Morris Island in the War Between the States.

## **About the Author—Russell Hordes**

Russell Horres is a native of Charleston and resides in Mount Pleasant. In addition to a lengthy career in medical product development, Dr. Horres served for twenty-five years as an adjunct associate professor of cell biology at Duke University. Russell has been a volunteer researcher and interpretive guide for the National Park Service since 2001. His work with the National Park has led to the discovery of long-lost records of the construction of Fort Sumter and was featured in an exhibit of how the National Park Service uses the National Archives to preserve history. He worked as a developmental history consultant on a historical structure report for Fort Sumter. Russell has also volunteered as a historian for Fort Johnson and has participated in giving a number of lectures and guided tours on the history of the site. He has been certified as a tour guide by the City of Charleston.

## ***The President and the Freedom Fighter***

In *The President and the Freedom Fighter*, Brian Kilmeade tells the little-known story of how two American heroes moved from strong disagreement to friendship, and in the process changed the entire course of history.

Abraham Lincoln was White, born impoverished on a frontier farm. Frederick Douglass was Black, a child of slavery who had risked his life escaping to freedom in the North. Neither man had a formal education, and neither had had an easy path to influence. No one would have expected them to become friends—or to transform the country. But Lincoln and Douglass believed in their nation's greatness. They were determined to make the grand democratic experiment live up to its ideals.

Lincoln's problem: he knew it was time for slavery to go, but how fast could the country change without being torn apart? And would it be possible to get rid of slavery while keeping America's Constitution intact? Douglass said no, that the Constitution was irredeemably corrupted by slavery—and he wanted Lincoln to move quickly. Sharing little more than the conviction that slavery was wrong, the two men's paths eventually converged. Over the course of the Civil War, they'd endure bloodthirsty mobs, feverish conspiracies, devastating losses on the battlefield, and a growing firestorm of unrest that would culminate on the fields of Gettysburg.

As he did in *George Washington's Secret Six*, Kilmeade has transformed this nearly forgotten slice of history into a dramatic story that will keep you turning the pages to find out how these two heroes, through their principles and patience, not only changed each other, but made America truly free for all.

Brian Kilmeade appears on *Fox and Friends* daily.



**MORRIS CENTER**  
FOR LOWCOUNTRY HERITAGE



## **New Civil War Exhibit Now on View**

### ***Morris Center Expands Battle of Honey Hill Exhibition***

Ridgeland, S.C., March 4, 2021 —The Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage is pleased to announce the reopening of its *Battle of Honey Hill* exhibition. This event is significant because the battle, fought near Ridgeland, S.C., was the first one of the Civil War to involve a large number of African Americans in combat.

With the existing diorama as the focal point, the exhibit includes new panels that tell a more detailed story of how the battle unfolded, newly unearthed artifacts from the site including tools and ammunition, a tribute to four Medal of Honor recipients, and a section entitled “Voices of Honey Hill” which shares first-hand accounts from some of the soldiers involved.

“Generous support from our sponsors made it possible to expand the exhibit which has been on display here since we opened in 2015,” says Morris Center Executive Director Tamara Herring. “We enlisted the help of Civil War scholars and strived to give it more historical context as well as explain the battle’s significance in terms of the intersection of people who were engaged in it.”

South Carolina Humanities, the town of Ridgeland, and Jasper County provided funds to support the project.

The Morris Center is open to the public Tuesday – Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. For more information, please visit [www.morrisheritagecenter.org](http://www.morrisheritagecenter.org).

Located in the heart of downtown Ridgeland on US 17, Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage is a learning and exhibition center dedicated to preserving and cultivating the history, culture and spirit of Ridgeland and its surrounding counties. Housed in a collection of vintage buildings, with the architecturally distinctive Sinclair Service Station as its focal point, the center features ever-changing exhibitions, interactive and dynamic learning opportunities, cultural offerings, storytelling and other forms of art.

## Thanksgiving and the Civil War

In 1863, in the bowels of Civil War, Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation to establish the first national day of Thanksgiving. As in most wars, the men of the Civil War found it excruciatingly difficult to be away from loved ones at holiday time. Thanksgiving was no exception.

The holiday itself has its roots in the Civil War. The first official proclamation declaring Thanksgiving as a national day of remembrance was issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, partly in honor of Northern successes in the war that year. Lincoln designated the last Thursday in November “as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise.” He called on his “fellow-citizens in every part of the United States” to “set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving.” Lincoln’s Proclamation made no mention of Pilgrims or Indians.

That year, Thanksgiving fell on the day after a crucial Union victory at the battle of Chattanooga. The previous year in late November, armies were on the march during the Fredericksburg and Vicksburg campaigns. Around Thanksgiving 1864, some Union forces were on the cusp of the bloody battle of Franklin, while others were marching to the sea with William T. Sherman.

Due to their harsh surroundings, many Civil War men in the field enjoyed only the most spartan of celebrations. In Kewanee, Illinois, teenage sisters Tirzah and Sarah Vaill received a letter from their older brother, an Illinois infantryman, after Thanksgiving 1861 that described his holiday meal, “hard bread” and salt pork. He added that “during the day I thought of you at home having your nice dinners” and “wishing maybe that you might present a plate to some of us soldiers filled with your own goodies.”

From his camp in Virginia that same year, Private Zebina Bickford of the 6th Vermont Infantry made the best of his day. In a letter home, he mused that “you may think we are homesick today but it is not so,” mainly because of a care package sent from loved ones back in Vermont. The goodies consisted of “a box of clothing and a few knickknacks consisting of eatables” that made “a very good thanksgiving for us.”

With tongue in cheek, he wrote that “you can’t imagine what a lot of fine things we had for supper...a piece of sour bread and salt pork.” However, he gleefully noted that “some of mother’s cookies and doughnuts that came in our box” made the evening memorable. It would be Bickford’s last Thanksgiving, as he died the following April 30.

The following year, Asa Bean, a doctor in the 114th Ohio, enjoyed greater tidings. On Nov. 27, 1862, he wrote that “there has been a surprise party here today for the benefit of soldiers and nurses.” The feast included “roast turkey, chicken, pigeon, and oysters stewed” along with

“baked chicken, boiled potatoes, turnip, apple butter, and cheese butter.” Bean, though, lamented that he “cannot eat much without being sick.” He, too, would die months later.

Elsewhere that year, Federal soldiers stationed at Fort Pulaski, Ga. held their own “fete and festival.” The day’s events included target practice and a rowing match, foot race and hurdle sack race. Competitions involving a greased pole and a greased pig were also on the agenda, as was a “burlesque dress parade.”

In some cases, Thanksgiving was a time of spiritual reflection. On the first official installment of the holiday in 1863, Sewell Van Alstine, a soldier in the 95th Illinois, wrote in his diary that he “went to town” and “heard an excellent discourse by an army chaplain at the Presbyterian Church.” He also wrote there was “no drill today,” a welcome respite.

In 1864, the Union League Club of New York City pleaded for donations of “cooked poultry and other proper meats” as well as “mince pies, sausages, and fruits” for men in the field. The call brought in some \$57,000 in cash donations, as well as nearly 225,000 pounds of poultry and large quantities of cakes, gingerbread, pickles, apples, vegetables, and cheese. One appreciative soldier saw the deeper meaning, writing that “it isn’t the turkey, but the idea that we care for.”

Others received far less. That year, Lewis Crater of the 50th Pennsylvania recorded in his diary that the Sanitary Commission “issued three fine apples to every man.” Despite the middling fare, Crater and others likely gave thanks that they had survived to see another Thanksgiving during the four bloodiest years in American history.

## **Christmas and the Civil War**

Christmas in the American Civil War (1861–1865) was celebrated in the Confederate States of America (the South) but frowned upon and actually fined in Massachusetts. It was seen as an unnecessary expense and should be a day of fasting by the Puritans and Lutherans. The day did not become an official holiday until five years after the war ended. The war continued to rage on Christmas and skirmishes occurred throughout the countryside. Celebrations for both troops and civilians saw significant alteration. Propagandists, such as Thomas Nast used wartime Christmases to reflect their beliefs. In 1870, Christmas became an official Federal holiday when resident Ulysses S. Grant made it so in an attempt to unite north and south.





"Christmas in Camp," an illustration by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly

It can be difficult to relate to the men and women of the Civil War era. Despite the extraordinarily different circumstances in which they found themselves, however, we can connect with our forebears in traditions such as the celebration of Christmas. By the mid-19th century, most of today's familiar Christmas trappings — Christmas carols, gift giving and tree decoration — were already in place. Charles Dickens had published "A Christmas Carol" in 1843 and indeed, the Civil War saw the first introductions to the modern image of a jolly and portly Santa Claus through the drawings of Thomas Nast, a German-speaking immigrant.

Civil War soldiers in camp and their families at home drew comfort from the same sorts of traditions that characterize Christmas today. Alfred Bellard of the 5th New Jersey noted, "In order to make it look much like Christmas as possible, a small tree was stuck up in front of our tent, decked off with hard tack and pork, in lieu of cakes and oranges, etc." John Haley, of the 17th Maine, wrote in his diary on Christmas Eve that, "It is rumored that there are sundry boxes and mysterious parcels over at Stoneman's Station directed to us. We retire to sleep with feelings akin to those of children expecting Santa Claus."

In one amusing anecdote, a Confederate prisoner relates how the realities of war intruded on his Christmas celebrations: "A friend had sent me a bottle of old brandy in a package. On Christmas morning I quietly called several comrades up to my bunk to taste the precious fluid of...DISAPPOINTMENT! The bottle had been opened outside, the brandy taken and replaced with water...and sent in. I hope the Yankee who played that practical joke lived to repent it and was shot before the war ended."

For many, the holiday was a reminder of the profound melancholy that had settled over the entire nation. Southern parents warned their children that Santa might not make it through the blockade, and soldiers in bleak winter quarters were reminded, more acutely than ever, of the domestic bliss they had left behind. Robert Gould Shaw, who would later earn glory as the

commander of the 54th Massachusetts, recorded in his diary, "It is Christmas morning and I hope a happy and merry one for you all, though it looks so stormy for our poor country, one can hardly be in merry humor." On the Confederate home front, Sallie Brock Putnam of Richmond echoed Shaw's sentiment: "Never before had so sad a Christmas dawned upon us...We had neither the heart nor inclination to make the week merry with joyousness when such a sad calamity hovered over us." For the people of Fredericksburg, Virginia, which had been battered only a matter of days before Christmas, or Savannah, Georgia, which General Sherman had presented to President Lincoln as a gift, the holiday season brought the war to their very doorsteps.



An illustration of Christmas on the home front by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly

Christmas during the Civil War served both as an escape from and a reminder of the awful conflict rending the country in two. Soldiers looked forward to a day of rest and relative relaxation, but had their moods tempered by the thought of separation from their loved ones. At home, families did their best to celebrate the holiday, but wondered when the vacant chair would again be filled.



## Speakers in 2022

January 26	Jerry Morris	Battle at Rivers Bridge
February 23	Ford Hutchinson	Civil War on Hilton Head Island before, during and after
March 23	Jack Davis	The Information Age—1860 Style
April 27	Debra Conner	Dr. Mary Walker, Civil War Surgeon
May 25	Jim Morgan	Ball's Bluff
Sept. 28	Neil Baxley	Gen. Stephen Elliott, Jr., Beaufort Confederate General
Oct. 26	Park Service Rep	Reconstruction after Civil War
Nov. 30	Paul Quigley	to come

## The Friends of Honey Horn

The Friends of Honey Hill have begun the process of trail clearing on the battlefield, and are working with the SC Battlefield Preservation Trust in this effort. In the coming weeks, we'll be sharing progress photos and more information about the battlefield and our efforts to preserve it. Please follow us on social media @fohh1864 (Twitter) and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fohh1864/> (Facebook) for more information. Thanks for your support!

## *Mitchelville*, a play by Aurin Squire

A play of interest will be *Mitchelville* by Aurin Squire. This is a Lean Ensemble Theatre Production running from March 17 to 27. Tickets are available at calling 843-715-6676

Directed by Christopher Windom

When a young man tries to save his Gullah family home, he dives into the history of his family lineage, the Civil War, and the first town of Black freedmen in America. *Mitchellville* is a story about learning from the past, saving for the future and keeping a tradition going.

## Dues

The Executive Committee has voted to keep dues at \$30 this year per family. This is a reduction in \$10 from our previous amount of \$40. A form for renewing can be found at the back of this newsletter. It is an easy drop off in Riverbend. The guest fee has also been dropped to \$5.00.



**LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE, INC.**

Annual Membership for all household members: **\$30.00**

**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

CURRENT MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NEW MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 to AUGUST 31, 2022**

Please **Print** All Information Below

---

Last Name	First Name	Badge Nickname
-----------	------------	----------------

---

Last Name (Additional Household Member)	First Name	Badge Nickname
---	------------	----------------

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Sun City Residents Only**

**New** CAM number \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Household member **New** CAM number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Household member E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

(We will keep this confidential!)

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 or contact at the email address **[joseph.passiment900@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.passiment900@gmail.com)**

# Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

## 2019-21 Executive Committee

### President – John Allen

303 Moss Creek Drive, Hilton Head, SC 29926  
[woodystjohn@gmail.com](mailto:woodystjohn@gmail.com) 540 815-5651

### Vice President – Kay Allen

303 Moss Creek Drive, Hilton Head, SC 29926  
[bakakayallen@gmail.com](mailto:bakakayallen@gmail.com) 540 815 5651

### Treasurer – Ron Albert

156 Shearwater Point Dr., Bluffton, SC 29909  
[ralbert156@sc.rr.com](mailto:ralbert156@sc.rr.com) 207-205-7854

### Secretary – Dave McColloch

42 Concession Oak Drive, Bluffton, SC 29909  
[mccollochd@hargray.com](mailto:mccollochd@hargray.com) 843-705-3060

### Member at large – Tom McNamara

56 Heron Bill Drive, Bluffton, SC 29909  
[tommcsr@yahoo.com](mailto:tommcsr@yahoo.com) 843-707-0933

### Communications

Sandi Schroeder

23 Camilla Pink Ct., Bluffton, SC 29909  
[sanindex@schroederindexing.com](mailto:sanindex@schroederindexing.com) 843 705 9779

John Foster

205 Benjamin Seabrook Ct., Bluffton, SC 29909  
[Fosterjp800@gmail.com](mailto:Fosterjp800@gmail.com) 843 705 6444

### Membership

Joe Passiment

26 Schooner Lane, Bluffton, SC 29909  
[Joseph.passiment900@gmail.com](mailto:Joseph.passiment900@gmail.com)  
732 995 2102

### Programs

Gene Sullivan

87 Doncaster Lane, Bluffton, SC 29909  
[etinh@hargray.com](mailto:etinh@hargray.com) 843-705-0964

John Kemp

317 Shearwater Point Dr., Bluffton, SC 29909  
[Norwich68@gmail.com](mailto:Norwich68@gmail.com) 201-845-4178

# Minié Ball Gazette

Is published by

The Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

Located in the greater Hilton Head area of South Carolina.

Founded in 2000 and dedicated to Civil War history,  
education and battlefield preservation.

**A Not-for-Profit, Charitable Organization as qualified under section  
501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.**

*Note: The website address is*

*[www.lcwrt.squarespace.com](http://www.lcwrt.squarespace.com) and it can*

*be used to get current and historical LCWRT information.*