

Federal Point Historic Preservation Society

P.O. Box 623, Carolina Beach, North Carolina 28428

Newsletter

Volume 12 No. 4

April, 2005

Darlene Bright, editor

April Meeting

The Federal Point Historic Preservation Society will hold its regular monthly meeting, Monday, April 18, 2005, 7:30 PM, at the Federal Point History Center, 1121-A North Lake Park Blvd., adjacent to the Carolina Beach Town Hall.

The first submarine to engage an enemy ship, the *Hunley* will be the subject for discussion at this month's meeting. Mr. Bush James will present a film on the funeral services held for the *Hunley's* crew and lead the discussion.

Members and the public are cordially invited to attend. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

Last Month

Mr. Marvin Nicholson presented a very enlightening lecture on the important part blacks played in the Confederate Military. Through research in pension rolls and statistics gathered by he and other educators, the extent of black participation in all aspects of the war effort was shown to be quite significant. Obviously, Mr. Nicholson, an avid Civil War reenactor, has a passion for Civil War history and honors those of his race who fought for the South in this great sectional controversy.

Message From Your President

Patricia Gray Bolander

Spring is finally here and it is a lift to the heart and soul to see all the flowers and budding trees. Sunshine always invigorates me!

In lieu of "Park Day" at Fort Fisher, we are doing a project of re-laying the brick area around the Confederate Monument on April 15, Friday, and April 16, Saturday, from 9 am – 3 pm both days. We will be serving lunch so please call me at 458-1476 so we will know how many to plan for. Your help is greatly appreciated. We can use four or five able-bodied men each day.

With properties being torn down to make use of valuable lots on our Island, we really need to identify properties that will be receptive of our Historic Plaques. So many are already GONE, but will they be also FORGOTTEN?

Whatever Happened to the Gunboat, C.S.S. *Chickamauga*?

During the Battles for Fort Fisher the famed Confederate gunboat, *Chickamauga*, happened to be in the Cape Fear River. Not as successful as the C.S.S. *Alabama*, it had its successes. Formerly the Blockade Runner, *Edith*, owned by Collie & Company, it had made eleven successful trips through the Union Blockade before being purchased by the Confederate Navy, and converted to a gunboat, renamed *Chickamauga*. The iron hulled 175-foot steamer carried a crew of thirty-two men and officers with three rifled cannons. Its final feat against the Federal enemy occurred in the afternoon of January 14, 1865, when it spotted Brigadier General Adelbert Ames' infantry poised on the Cape Fear River Road to attack Fort Fisher on the west of the land face as Lieutenant Commander K. R. Breece's sailors and mariners attacked on the sea face. The *Chickamauga* fired into Ames' ranks, preventing the simultaneous attack.

When Fort Fisher fell, *Chickamauga*, along with practically all Confederate vessels in the Cape Fear River, was scuttled by the Confederates to prevent their capture. Almost immediately after the surrender at Appamatox, the U.S. Navy Department set out advertisements for raising wrecks in the Cape Fear River as maritime prizes. The following bid was approved May 12, 1865:

Navy Department *Bureau of Construction and Repair*

June 12th, 1865

Sir:

In a letter of the 25th May you were informed the Department had accepted your bids of the 10th May for raising the wrecks in and about Cape Fear River, under the advertisement of the 13th April 1865, under all the conditions expressed in it. Your letter of acceptance of the 29th May has been received - also your letter of the 2nd inst., in which you state that you will require a period of nine months for all the work that has been awarded to you, and to which the Department accedes.

The following named vessels embraced in your offer, to be raised with all the property that may be on board of them, and delivered in New York, on a salvage

upon the net proceeds of their sale at public auction, the Government to be at no expense whatever: viz:

The "North Heath" at forty 40% percent of the net proceeds of the sale.

"Agnes Fry" at forty-five (45%) " " " " " " " "

"Chickamauga" at thirty-five (35%) " " " " " " " "

The wrecks of the following vessels to be delivered at the Gosport Navy Yard, on a salvage upon the property recovered, without charge of any kind to the Government - viz:

The "Thorn" at forty-four (44%) percent of the net proceeds of the sale

"Yadkin" at fifty (50%) " " " " " " " "

"Equater" at sixty (60%) " " " " " " " "

"Arctic" at sixty (60%) " " " " " " " "

Each of the vessels delivered in New York must have a separate invoice of the property on board, and all the materials recovered and delivered at the Gosport Navy Yard must be accompanied by a separate invoice for each vessel.

For the execution of the whole work above specified, the time of nine months will be allowed, from the 15th day of June, 1865.

The work to be executed under the control of the commanding naval officer, who will designate the vessel on which operations are to be first commenced, and who will have the right, if the work is not promptly commenced, and diligently prosecuted to his satisfaction, to annul this agreement, when all claims of the salvors to the property recovered will be forfeited to the Government.

The entire property will be placed in the hands of the Government, and sale will be made as may be deemed most advantageous to the Government and the parties concerned.

The commanding naval officer will have the right to give any instructions that, in his opinion, the interest of the Government demands.

Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant

(Signed) John Lenthall

Chief of Bureau

The hull of the *Chickamauga* was eventually raised and converted into an inglorious West India fruiter.

Society Notes

● **Membership Information:** Renewal notices are being sent on the anniversary of your joining the Society. If you have been receiving a Newsletter, and we have not heard from you within 90 days of the billing date, your name will be placed in the inactive file and no Newsletter will be sent. Thanks to all who have responded promptly! Our renewals are up! Your support of our local preservation efforts with your membership is very important as it is the lifeblood of our organization.

● **History Center News!** You, too, can play a big part in making the History Center fulfill its purpose. Don't let the Center be a best kept secret. Bring your ideas and your appreciation for Federal Point history. Let's make our History Center the best it can be. Through new projects made possible by your participation, we can achieve a greater level. Please sign-up at the Monday meeting, or call me at 458-8684 to express your thoughts and volunteer. The History Center is opened every Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, or other times by appointment. Thanks to our volunteers: Henriette Wiegler – 12 hours; Jeannie Gordon - 10 hours; Leslie Bright - 9 hours; and Darlene Bright - 20 hours. Pat Bolander – 2 hours. The Carolina Beach Fire Department held its barbeque fundraiser on Saturday, April 9, which brought a lot of traffic our way and we had 40 visitors to our Center this month.

● **May 10th, Fort Fisher State Historic Site** will be having a **Confederate Memorial Day** program honoring the men who built and defended Fort Fisher, the Malakoff Tower of the South. For more information , call 458-5538.

● **Federal Point History Center** is now listed in Insider Guides' community calendar on the web. Go to www.insiderinfo.us, click on the map for Wilmington, scroll thru the calendar.

We welcome contributions to the Newsletter. If you have something you would like to share, please call me at 458-8684.

Officers

President - Pat Bolander
Vice-President - John Gordon
Secretary - Darlene Bright
Treasurer - Jeannie Gordon

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Leslie Bright
Barbara Hoppe

Directors

Lynn Benson
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