

FORT FISHER
STATE
HISTORIC SITE

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST

- Discounts in the Museum Store (page 2)
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The Powder Magazine

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2

FALL/WINTER 2018

Fort Fisher Christmas Holiday Open House 2018



Masonboro Parlor

Join us Saturday, Dec. 1, 2018, as we celebrate a Fort Fisher Christmas at our annual Holiday Open House. Sponsored by UDC Fort Fisher Chapter 2325 and the Friends of Fort Fisher, the open house will feature live entertainment, free refreshments, seasonal decorations, and a one-day only discount of 15% in the museum store.

We will fire the cannon periodically throughout the day and one lucky ticketholder will win our Civil War playset raffle. Join the Friends of Fort Fisher while there and take the opportunity to find everything you need for the history lover on your holiday shopping list. Invited musical guests include John Bennet and Masonboro Parlor and local favorite John Golden.

The program is free and open to the public and will be held from 10 am to 4 pm. Join us for the holiday spirit and fellowship.



John Golden

From the Site Manager, Jim Steele...

Dear Friends:

I have some good news to share: Fort Fisher will begin detailed design planning for new facilities in November 2018. This process will take approximately 15 months and will result in construction drawings for a new visitor center, exhibits and reconstructed earthwork fortifications. This is very exciting and the outcome of years of hard work by many people in NC Historic Sites and the Friends of Fort Fisher. The prospect of having a new visitor center with triple the exhibit space as our current facility is amazing, as is rebuilding the earthworks that were demolished during WWII to make way for the airstrip. The potential to better preserve and interpret Fort Fisher is tremendous, but we need your help to make it happen.

To secure the state funding we need to build the structures, and to have a successful capital campaign for exhibits, the Friends of Fort Fisher needs a large and strong membership base. Joining the Friends is your chance to be involved with the most exciting project happening in the Lower Cape Fear region today. Joining the Friends is a commitment to preserving our Civil War history, and to sharing it with the visitors who come to see us from all over the country and even the world. Your voice can make all the difference in ensuring a successful outcome for this project. If you are already a member, share this with your family and friends and encourage them to become members of the Fort Fisher team. You will be happy you did, and the Friends of Fort Fisher and NC Historic Sites will be grateful for your support.

Finally, we have some great programs coming up soon. Please join us here for a Fort Fisher Christmas on Saturday, December 1. We will have music, refreshments and fire that cannon everyone loves so much! And be sure to come on Saturday, January 12 when we commemorate the 154th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Fisher. This is our signature program and a great way for you to spend your day. Bring the whole family and we will see you here!

Best regards,
Jim

Museum Store Corner by Sharon Copland, museum store manager

Merry Christmas and happy holiday shopping! To kick off the season, we hope you will join us for our December 1 Open House. It's the perfect opportunity to enjoy the fun and festivities and **SAVE 15% store-wide**. You can save on books, toys, jewelry, historical souvenirs, and more! We have an array of stocking stuffers for under \$10: magnets, key chains, shot glasses, and lapel pins; toy planes, cannon pencil sharpeners, doubloons (Aarrrrgh!) and coloring books.

All Friends of Fort Fisher and all military guests receive 10% off on purchases every day. This is your chance to save even more, have some fun, and help us keep history alive!!! Last, but not least, remember our **ONE -DAY-ONLY** HOLIDAY SPECIALS!!!

- ◆ FORT FISHER BALL CAPS- red or stone—25% OFF!
- ◆ FORT FISHER JIGSAW PUZZLES—25% OFF!
- ◆ ALL 3' X 5' FLAGS AND FLAG SETS—25% OFF!
- ◆ FEDERAL POINT LIGHTHOUSE BRASS ORNAMENTS—Buy 1 and get 50% off a second. Buy one and gift one!



Federal Point Lighthouse Ornament—\$6



Fort Fisher to highlight Federal Point Lighthouse with new exhibit & gifts by Becky Sawyer

From 1817 through 1880, a series of three lights guided mariners into New Inlet through the treacherous shoals of the Atlantic Ocean. Cited by various names; the Federal Point Beacon, Federal Point Beacon Light, New Inlet Lighthouse, Federal Point Lighthouse and Fort Fisher Light. This exhibit explains the history of the lighthouses along with its' connection to Fort Fisher.

The location of the 1817 light is unknown, however, the 1837 lighthouse and keeper's cottage was located in a one-acre plot. This single acre was donated to the City of Wilmington in 1928 and would become Battle Acre. The 1866 Lighthouse was not built at the original location shown in the image above, as the remains of Fort Fisher are visible.

When the beacon on Federal Point was upgraded to a "light" in 1827, the Treasury department assigned a lighthouse keeper. Edward Newton became the first keeper of the "New Inlet Light" on Federal Point.

A new exhibit at Fort Fisher will showcase artifacts from the 1963 Stan South archaeological dig of the lighthouse keeper's cottage and the 2009 archaeological dig of the 1837 Federal Point Lighthouse. Most of these artifacts have never been on display until now. Reproduction mocha ware mugs based off of examples of mocha ware ceramics found in 1963 will be available in the gift shop. SJ Pottery of Mountain Home, AR, will be making these one of a kind mugs.



fort fisher

January 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**154th Second Battle Commemoration,
Saturday, Jan. 12, 2019, 10 am - 4 pm**



April 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**April 6 , 2019: Civil War Trust
Park Day, 8:30 am — 12 pm**



**April 27, 2019:
Confederate Memorial Day UDC
Program
10 am**



calendar of events

JUNIOR RESERVES



SATURDAY, JANUARY 12
(10:00 – 2:00PM)

“SCHOOL OF THE SOLDIER”

FRIDAY, JUNE 14
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“TOY SOLDIER WORKSHOP”

FRIDAY, JUNE 21
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“TOWN BALL”

SATURDAY, JUNE 28
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY
GUNNER”

FRIDAY, JULY 5
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“A SOLDIER’S LIFE”

FRIDAY, JULY 12
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“ATTENTION CANNONEERS!”

FRIDAY, JULY 19
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“ARCHEOLOGY: DIGGING
THROUGH THE PAST”

FRIDAY, JULY 26
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“THE ART OF THE SAILOR”

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“SECRET CODES AND CIPHERS”

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

“CIVIL WAR COMMUNICA-
TIONS”

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12
(10:00AM – 4:00PM)

WWII PROGRAM “TOY SOLDIER
WORKSHOP” & “AAA GUNNER”

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19-
20, 2020
(10:00AM – 2:00PM)

155TH BATTLE COMMEMORA-
TION
“SCHOOL OF THE SOLDIER”

June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Part 1: Day of Unprecedented Carnage: Colonel William Lord DeRosset & the 3rd North Carolina at Sharpsburg

By Ray Flowers, Curator of History

By the time of Colonel William Lamb's ascension as commandant of Fort Fisher on July 4, 1862, a succession of officers had preceded him in overseeing the construction of the defenses on Confederate Point. Collectively, most of his predecessors left few lasting impressions on the sands of New Inlet's beaches; yet several of these men went on to immortalize themselves in other theaters of war, indelibly inscribing their deeds with their life's blood on the pages of history like legends chiseled in granite. For one of these officers, Colonel William Lord DeRosset, that date with destiny came on September 17th 1862 - a day of unprecedented carnage.

Like all the other commanders, excepting Lamb, DeRosset's tenure at Fort Fisher was transitory. In May 1861, soon after the outbreak of war, and even before North Carolina officially seceded, the twenty-eight-year-old captain and his elite militia company, the Wilmington Light Infantry, were sent to garrison the point. However, the brevity of William Lord DeRosset's stay was especially brusque and before the month was gone so was he. The newly commissioned major of the 3rd North Carolina having departed the county and the company with orders to report posthaste to the camp of instruction (Camp Clarendon) at Garysburg, North Carolina where his freshly recruited regiment was being assembled. With many of the soldiers sharing relations and close associations with the Lower Cape Fear, the major, a native to the area, was a good fit for the 3rd North Carolina. In fact, three of the ten companies and all the field officers, including the major's brother-in-law, Colonel Gaston Meares, hailed from New Hanover County. Even then, the DeRosset's were one of Wilmington's oldest and most respected families, French Huguenots who had arrived in the Cape Fear Colony in 1735, when Wilmington was not yet Wilmington, but rather "...a small hamlet of some forty families, then called New Liverpool." Establishing themselves in the community as physicians and merchants, they had since proven themselves not only pillars of the province, but when the trial came - patriots as well. (All told, six sons and three sons-in-law served the Confederacy, as did the women who were no shrinking violets either, sacrificing for the cause with fervid devotion).



DeRosset

In early September 1862, when the 3rd forded the Potomac with the rest of General Lee's army into Maryland, Colonel William Lord DeRosset was in command, Colonel Meares having been killed on the last day of the Seven Days fighting at Malvern Hill. Flushed with the recent victory at Second Manassas the Southerners were confident and morale had never been higher. One Confederate veteran fondly recalled the tenor of their crossing, "There were few moments, perhaps, from the beginning to the close of the war, of excitement more intense, of exhilaration more delightful, than when we ascended the opposite bank to the familiar but now strangely thrilling music of 'Maryland, My Maryland.'" But the exhilaration was short lived and with the summer of '62 drawing to a close, the forecast turned somber. For more than a week the blue and the gray played a lethal high stakes game of hide-n-seek that carried them across western Virginia and southern mid-Maryland before eventually converging and descending on the small town of Sharpsburg. Now, just east of the village the two armies postured among the undulating, rolling, rocky countryside, massing against Antietam Creek, filling the wood lots, and filing into the lanes that bisected the fields and pastures of numerous farms. Aligned on a north/south axis along a four-mile front, nearly 40,000 Confederates with 200 guns glared across at over 70,000 Federals and their 300 cannon. With the hamlet and the Potomac at their backs the invaders were facing a precarious predicament and possible annihilation should they blink first.

When daylight dawned on that terrible Maryland morning the two foes were close - eyeball to eyeball close - yet despite the proximity, visibility in the early morn was eerily obscured by overcast skies and a ground fog that shrouded the earth. It had drizzled rain the night before and sporadic picket firing and false alarms had made for a restive evening. The anxiety was palpable, nerves were raw and taut, everyone knew what was coming. Soon, the artillery of both sides began feeling for one another. One witness recalled that, "Each discharge was at first discernable but after a little [while] grew so rapid...that it became one prolonged roar.

Continued on page 7

Part 1: Day of Unprecedented Carnage: Colonel William Lord DeRosset & the 3rd North Carolina at Sharpsburg , continued from page 6

About 5:30 a.m. the Federals rolled down from the north and east onto the Rebel's left flank. The focus of their advance lay ahead, beyond a rectangle of ground about a half mile wide and a mile deep, bordered on three sides by copses of trees aptly and respectively labeled North, East and West Woods. Just in advance of the West Woods, in the far south-west corner, stood the Dunker Church, a small white-washed building so modest in appearance that some mistook it for a school house. At the center of this disputed point of contention and ripe for the harvest was David R. Miller's thirty-acre cornfield. In 1862 there must have been hundreds of thousands of cornfields throughout the country, but this was soon to become "the Cornfield" and o' what a gruesome bounty it would reap. Just a little below the church and cornfield was the Samuel

Mumma farm where troops of General Daniel Harvey Hill's division had bivouacked for the evening. There the 3rd North Carolina was on the receiving end of a rude awakening when one of the enemy's first shots fell among them wounding some sixteen officers and men. Soon after, the troops of General

Roswell Ripley's brigade received their orders and DeRosset's men, along with their sister regiment the 1st North Carolina, and the 4th and 44th Georgia, began to stir. Unfortunately for the Mummas, their farm lay between the two armies and in the path of the brigade's advance; concerned that enemy snipers might occupy the vacated property, a detail of incendiaries from the 3rd were instructed to torch the house, barn and out-buildings, leaving a towering, grim specter of black smoke looming in the wake of their destruction.

Around 7:00 a.m., with the battle little more than an hour old, the situation for the Confederates was already growing desperate. To counter the emergency, "Stonewall" Jackson called on his last reserve. Complying with orders, General John Bell Hood with the Don Quixote face and the wooden head, employing the only tactic that he ever learned, led his depleted division, two brigades, 2,300 men into the frenzy. They were shock troops and they flooded onto the field with the inertia of a tidal wave; fighting over their heads, diverging in three directions, they stormed through the stalks with an irresistible current that swept the Federals off the field and back to the perimeters of the fences, turnpikes and woods that bordered the field. They held for the better part of a half hour before attrition and overwhelming odds began to tell and the tide started to ebb against them. Having sustained over 1,300 casualties they were forced to give way; later when asked as to the



whereabouts of his division Hood profoundly reported them as, "Dead on the field." To check the impending Union counterattack, soldiers from neighboring commands were shifted to the left, bolstering the woefully thin flank. Time and again throughout that long day, by the narrowest of margins, the Rebels managed to avert disaster by employing this maneuver. As one witness recalled, "...there were no unfought soldiers, no spectators, no reserves in the Army of Northern Virginia that memorable day. Every regiment had its taste of battle and blood." Now "Stonewall" looked to his brother-in-law for assistance and Hill promptly ordered three of his brigades to the rescue. Ripley's men, being closest to the fighting were ahead of the other two brigades and in the van guard when they climbed a stout fence, crossed Smoketown Road and

trespassed onto the property of D.R. Miller minus their commander who, according to DeRosset, "had been slightly wounded in the throat" as the command struggled to breach the Mumma's fence. Obviously, disgusted, DeRosset expressed no regard, nor compassion for their "unworthy commander," remarking, "Pity he had not then received a death wound."

In the absence of "Old Rip", the senior field officer, Colonel George Doles of the 4th Georgia, commanded the men as they pushed forward in brigade front into the maw of the maelstrom. On the extreme right, the 3rd could be readily distinguished by the two standards that they carried. Contrary to orders, their North Carolina State Flag waved in tandem with the Confederate Flag overhead as they marched toward the fray. Only uniformed regimental "Battle Flags" were supposed to be displayed, yet DeRosset, "at the request of both officers and men once more unfurled our North Carolina colors... and in addition to our "Battle Flag" carried this into the engagement..." Skirting the East Woods as they advanced, one apprehensive "Tar Heel" observed that, "no [other] Confederate troops were to be seen either to the front or to the flanks."

Pushing on into the cornfield they were soon, "in the deadly embrace of the enemy," and consumed in a clouded conflagration of flame and smoke where many of the precise details of the narrative were extinguished with the narrators and interred with the dead. Yet much can be deduced by the snippets and fragments of testimony recorded by the battered survivors.

Continued on page 10



A message from executive director Christine Divoky

As our new Director at the Friends, I've been talking to members about why they think it's important to support Fort Fisher State Historic Site. One member, a man in his 40's, said "My parents' generation respected history. They understood that we need to truly know our past in order to learn from it. They honored the people and the lessons that came before. I'm afraid my kids' generation is losing that. To them historic figures are like characters in a book. I'm not sure they appreciate that real people lived through real struggles and sacrifice to get us where we are today. And they were regular people like you and me, with loyalties and confusion and hopes and dreams. We can't let time or shortened attention spans or changing views erase their stories. I guess I'm a Friends member, and also a donor, because I think I'm the generation that has to help the next generation hold on to its history. The buck stops with me. Our history will disappear if we don't preserve it and that would be a tragedy. Being a member of the Friends makes a difference." I couldn't have said it better myself. Join now and enjoy discounts in the gift shop, Carolina Beach Courtyard by Marriott Hotel stay discounts, invitations to and discounts for special member events and more. Most importantly, help us keep Fort Fisher's history alive. Please join, renew or upgrade your membership today. Good through December 2019.

The Friends of Fort Fisher gratefully wish to welcome and acknowledge new members and donors from July-October 2018.

July

Cape Fear Chapter #3 UDC, Donation
Donald Kannenberg, Palisades and Donation
Calvin N. Lewis, Whitworth Paver
Bill Perks, Whitworth Paver x 2

August

Worthy K Keener, Blockade Runner
Amy Thornton, Mounds
Craig Williams, Palisades

September

Greg Barnes, Palisades
John Bensen, Donation
Paul Benson, Mounds Renewal
Bradford Briner, Whitworth Paver

September, cont'd

Gilbert H Burnett, Donation
Mark Craddock, Palisades
Bryan and Sabra DeBose, Mounds Renewal
Pamela Ellis, Whitworth Paver
Robert Marks, Palisades
Bill Perks, Palisades
Chad Price, Palisades
David Wray, Palisades

October

Rebecca B. Burket, Palisades
Guilford Chapter #301 UDC, Donation
Bill Jayne, Palisades
Carrell Van Deacon, Palisades

JOIN NOW!

Friends of Fort Fisher, Inc. Membership Levels

Palisade Society – individual level of annual support. Your benefits include a Friends of Fort Fisher decal, recognition in The Powder Magazine quarterly newsletter, 10% discount on all purchases from our Fort Fisher Museum Shop, event discounts, and invitations to special member-only events.

Mounds Society - annual support with benefits applied to two adults in the same household. Benefits includes all of the above, plus one complimentary honorarium or memorial in one issue of The Powder Magazine newsletter and up to 20% off your Courtyard by Marriott at Carolina Beach stay.

Blockade Runner Society - annual support includes all of the above benefits plus a 6" x 9" engraved brick paver on Fort Fisher's Walk of Honor and a 20% discount off a special event site rental (no more than 1x per year).

Gibraltar of the South Society - annual support which includes all of the above benefits, but with a larger 9" x 9" engraved brick paver and the addition of a specially selected annual gift from the Museum Shop, and two complimentary tickets to our Evening at the Fort event, with a night-time cannon firing (must RSVP).

Col. Charles F. Fisher Society - annual support which includes all of the benefits of the Gibraltar level except with a beautiful premium engraved blue/gray 12" x 12" paver stone which may include an engraved emblem or logo and four complimentary tickets to our Evening at the Fort event, with a night-time cannon firing (must RSVP).

Other ways to contribute: Memorial and Honor Gifts, Artifact Donations, In-Kind Gifts, Volunteers, Named Gift Opportunities, Bequests – Contact the Friends Executive Director for information .



Annual Membership Society Categories

Palisade Society.....	\$40
Mounds Society.....	\$100
Blockade Runner Society.....	\$250
Gibraltar of the South Society...	\$500
Col. Charles F. Fisher Society....	\$1000

All society memberships are based on a calendar year (Jan-Dec). Contributions are tax deductible, less the fair market value of goods and services received. If you choose to waive society membership benefits, your contributions are fully tax-deductible. **Address questions to Executive Director, email cdivoky@friendsoffortfisher.com**

Visit www.friendsoffortfisher.com, select the membership tab and click on the *Join Now* button to access our secure online donation/membership page.

Fort Fisher State Historic Site

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Becky Sawyer, Collections Mng./Interpreter III

Ray Flowers, Historic Interpreter II

Si Lawrence, Public Info & Special Events

William S. Register, Chief of Police

David Sheaffer, Maintenance Manager

Jesse Hoskins, Site Assistant

Part 1: Day of Unprecedented Carnage: Colonel William Lord DeRosset & the 3rd North Carolina at Sharpsburg , continued from page 7

In Major Thruston's letter to Governor Vance, he described how at a hundred yards' distance, they had tenaciously stood toe-to-toe with, "the steady and well-formed ranks of the enemy, drawn up in three lines of battle, and supported by artillery..." and slugged it out, while subjected to a, "well directed fire of the enemy's rifles, grape and canister...". They were never-the-less able to repel the enemy's front rank, "even while our ranks melted rapidly...". Conveying their fearless and obstinate stand, the regimental historian would claim, "In truth, this one North Carolina regiment was in the vortex of the fire, the pivot upon which success or annihilation turned, and thank God, it stood the test..." Looking over the field one Union general observed that, "the slain lay in rows, precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before." Years afterward, Colonel DeRosset would congratulate himself upon having successfully petitioned the authorities for an exemption for his regiment when ordered to exchange their smoothbore muskets for rifles. He "always insisted that it was owing to the good use of the buck and ball at close range at Sharpsburg that the 3rd were enabled to do so much damage, and to hold their position..."

Stay tuned for Part 2 of Day of Unprecedented Carnage: Colonel William Lord DeRosset & the 3rd North Carolina at Sharpsburg, coming up in the January 2019 edition of The Powder Magazine.

This newsletter was
proudly produced with
support from the Friends of
Fort Fisher

Friends of Fort Fisher

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