

The ***RUNNER***

Newsletter of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Editor **Tim Winstead**

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, 10 April** at St. Andrew's On-the-Sound Episcopal Church (101 Airlie Road). Social Hour begins at 7:00 p.m. (with light refreshments), meeting at 7:30.

Please make plans to attend our April meeting. Visitors are always welcome – **ask a friend to join you**. Each of our speakers strives to enlighten, entertain, and add to our knowledge of Civil War history. This serves our mission of encouraging education and research into this seminal event in our nation's past.

***** April Program *****

“The Most Famous Private in the Civil War” – Private William Scott, 3rd Vermont Infantry

A number of years ago while looking into an April, 1862 minor skirmish, **Rick Eiserman** came across a number of references to a Vermont soldier identified as “the most famous private in the Civil War”. Surprise and curiosity led to more research, including a “surprise family vacation”, to examine the facts and fiction behind the story of Private William Scott, 3rd Vermont Infantry. Killed in battle with less than a year of service, how did a young private end up with: an 1863 poem about him read in the White House and the U.S. Senate chamber; a 1914 movie and a 1929 radio play made about his exploits; and a Vermont highway named in his honor?



**Rick at Gaines's Mill with Hood's
Texas Brigade Association Re-Activated**

Rick Eiserman is a long-time Civil War buff with a special interest in the history of Hood's Texas Brigade. During a 20-year U.S. Army career, Lieutenant Colonel Eiserman served in various command and staff positions in Europe, Korea and the U.S., including assignments as a military historian at both the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College. He has led a number of battlefield tours and staff rides, presented to numerous Civil War Round Tables and seminars, and published articles in several publications, including Civil War Times. He recently retired for a second time following a 20-year career in public education in

Pennsylvania and Georgia, in order to devote more time to the grandchildren and researching the Texas Brigade.

Rick is currently co-authoring a book on Hood's Texas Brigade with Dr. Susannah Ural to be published in the University of Tennessee "Voices of the Civil War" series. He is also editing the manuscript of PVT Joe Joskins, Co. A, 5th Texas Infantry for future publication.

Rick holds a Bachelor of Arts in Teaching degree with a major in history from Sam Houston State University, a Master's of Education from the University of Texas, and a Military Master's of Arts and Science from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. A member of the Harrisburg, PA CFWRT, Rick and his wife, Carmen currently live in Carlisle, PA.

Editor

******* Raffle Winners *******

Raffle Master: Ed Gibson

If you have books, prints, or other items that you would like to donate to the CFCWRT Raffle, contact Ed Gibson (egibson759@aol.com) before our next meeting. The raffle is one of the components which allow the CFCWRT to fund our activities and our speakers. Please take part in our raffles by contributing items to the raffle or purchasing tickets.



Robert E. Lee – Ulysses S. Grant

Ed Gibson

They Called Him Stonewall

Dick Covell

George Thomas

Bill James

Sherman

Dale Lear

The Civil War

Barbara Chilcote

Rebel

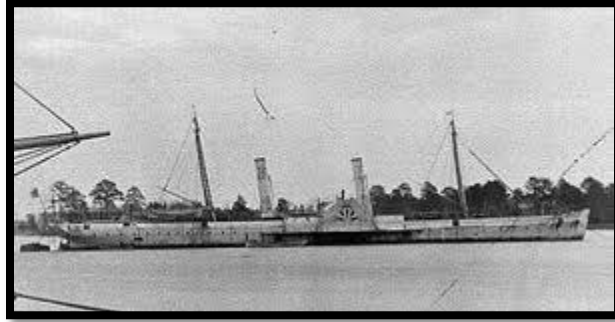
John Moore

******* Trivia Questions for April *******

1 – How many military executions were carried out during the Civil War?

2 - What is the difference between **Strategy and **Tactics**?**

***** **Member News & Activities** *****



Robert E. Lee

If you have member news or news about Civil War events that you think would be of interest to CFCWRT membership, send me an email with the details. Thanks.

1 – Happy Easter to all members and friends of the CFCWRT on April 20th.

2 – April 5: Civil War Trust “Park Day,” Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Interested in helping beautify **Fort Fisher**? Volunteer for Park Day 2014! Great project for service clubs, scouts, and youth groups, but all volunteers are welcome. Free tee-shirts, patches and lunch provided. All volunteers must register in advance by calling the site at (910) 458-5538 or email info@friendsoffortfisher.com.

3 - The 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Plymouth, NC, will take place on April 25-27 when the Washington County Historical Society and Port ‘O Plymouth presents their Living History Weekend.

This 150th Anniversary of the second largest battle to be fought on North Carolina soil will come only once. The weekend will include two Battle Reenactments, a Torchlight Tour, a Period Tea Party, River Rides on the Roanoke, and a Field of Honor Luminary Display.

This is the 24th annual event but (obviously) the only 150th Anniversary. Member Keith Ward attended the 2013 event and was impressed enough to want all readers of *The Runner* to become aware of the event. Contact The Port of Plymouth Museum, 302 East Water Street, Plymouth, NC 27962, [252-793-377](tel:252-793-377) or www.livinghistoryweekend.com for more details.

4 – From the Western North Carolina Civil War Round Table: We have a large collection of Civil War books in paperback and hardcover, a few of which have been appraised as collectibles. We have been offering these to our members at a very low cost. At this time, we are opening this up to the public and are offering them first to other round tables and their members.

Inquiries to George Ferguson <http://wnccwrt.org>, or the link to our book collection is <http://www.wnccwrt.org/books.html>.

5 - The **Brunswick Civil War Round Table** will meet on **Tuesday, April 1st -** registration and refreshments: 6:30pm. Program will begin at 7:00pm. They will meet at the **Trinity Methodist Church**, 209 E. Nash Street.

Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr., Ph.D., popular local historian and UNCW history professor. His topic: "The Reconstruction of Wilmington: 1865 – 1898". Editor Note: Dr. Fonvielle should provide a detailed description of Wilmington during this period of rapid change, controversy and finally armed conflict.

***** April 1864 *****

April 1864 saw the American Civil War move into its fourth year. The improved weather meant that the month saw action on all the fronts. April 1864 witnessed another controversial incident in the war at Fort Pillow in Tennessee (April 12th).

April 2nd: The improving weather resulted in action throughout all of the theatre of war.

April 6th: The Constitutional Convention of Louisiana, meeting in New Orleans, adopted a new state constitution that abolished slavery.

April 8th: The Senate passed a joint resolution by 38 to 6 to abolish slavery. It also approved of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

Union forces suffered a defeat at Sabine Cross Roads. They lost 113 killed, 581 wounded and 1541 missing or captured. The South suffered total losses of 1000 men.

April 9th: Grant sent orders to Meade, commander of the Army of the Potomac. Meade's army had to follow Lee's Army of Northern Virginia wherever it went. Grant made it plain that the destruction of Lee's army was his top priority. "Wherever Lee goes, there you will head also."

In a follow-up to Sabine Cross Roads, Confederate troops attacked a Union force at Pleasant Bank. This was not a skirmish as both sides mustered 12,000 men. Both sides claimed a victory but ultimately it was the Confederates who were pushed back. The Union lost 150 dead, 844 wounded and 375 missing while the Confederates lost over 1,200 men.

April 11th: Union troops involved at Sabine Cross Roads and Pleasant Bank continue with their withdrawal from the Red River region.

April 12th: An attack by Confederate cavalry at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, became one of the most controversial incidents of the war. Fort Pillow was held by 557 Union troops, including 262 African-American troops. Confederate cavalry, commanded by Bedford Forrest, attacked and overwhelmed the fort. It was what happened next that caused

controversy. Of the 557 defenders, 231 were killed and 100 wounded. A high percentage of the deaths were African-American soldiers. In the post-war Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War it was claimed by those who survived that former slaves were specifically picked out by Forrest's men after the fort had surrendered – a claim he denied. Forrest claimed that the fort's commander carried on fighting even after it was obvious that the fort would fall. However, even by the standards of the American Civil War, casualties were high.

April 16th: A report released by the Union government showed that 146,634 Confederate prisoners had been captured since the beginning of the war.

April 17th: General Grant refused anymore prisoner exchanges. From a military point of view this was an obvious move as it reduced even further potential Confederate military reserves. However, the decision also condemned many Union men held as prisoners to appalling conditions. The South could barely feed itself, let alone prisoners-of-war.

Editor Note: See the Peter Cozzens article about Camp Cahaba that follows in this newsletter.

April 20th: A sea-based attack on Fort William, near Plymouth, N.C., was a resounding success for the Confederates. Not built to withstand a sea attack, the fort quickly surrendered with the capture of 2,800 men. More important, 200 tons of anthracite coal was also taken. The victory, while of no great strategic importance, was a huge morale boost for the South. However, this also should the plight of the South – celebrating a victory that had little importance to the overall way the war was going. **Editor Note: The C.S.S. Albemarle and Robert F. Hoke secured one of the last pure victories for Southern arms.**

April 22nd: Jefferson Davis sent out an order to Lieutenant General Polk that any captured African-American soldier who turned out to be an escaped slave had to be held until recovered by his owner.

April 26th: The loss of Fort William prompted Grant to pull out of Plymouth, North Carolina. In fact, Grant did not believe that the area had any strategic importance.

April 27th: Grant issued his orders for a spring offensive. The Army of the Potomac was to attack the Army of Northern Virginia head on. The Army of the James was to attack Richmond from the South. For Grant a co-ordinated and cohesive attack on the South's main fighting force was the start of the finish of the civil war. Grant believed that if his plan worked, the war would be over. He was not to know that on the same day Jefferson Davis sent Jacob Thompson to Canada to unofficially put out peace feelers for an end to the war.

April 30th: Davis sent out an order that any captured slave had to be returned to his owner.

Source: <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/april-1864-civil-war.htm>
(accessed February 14, 2014).

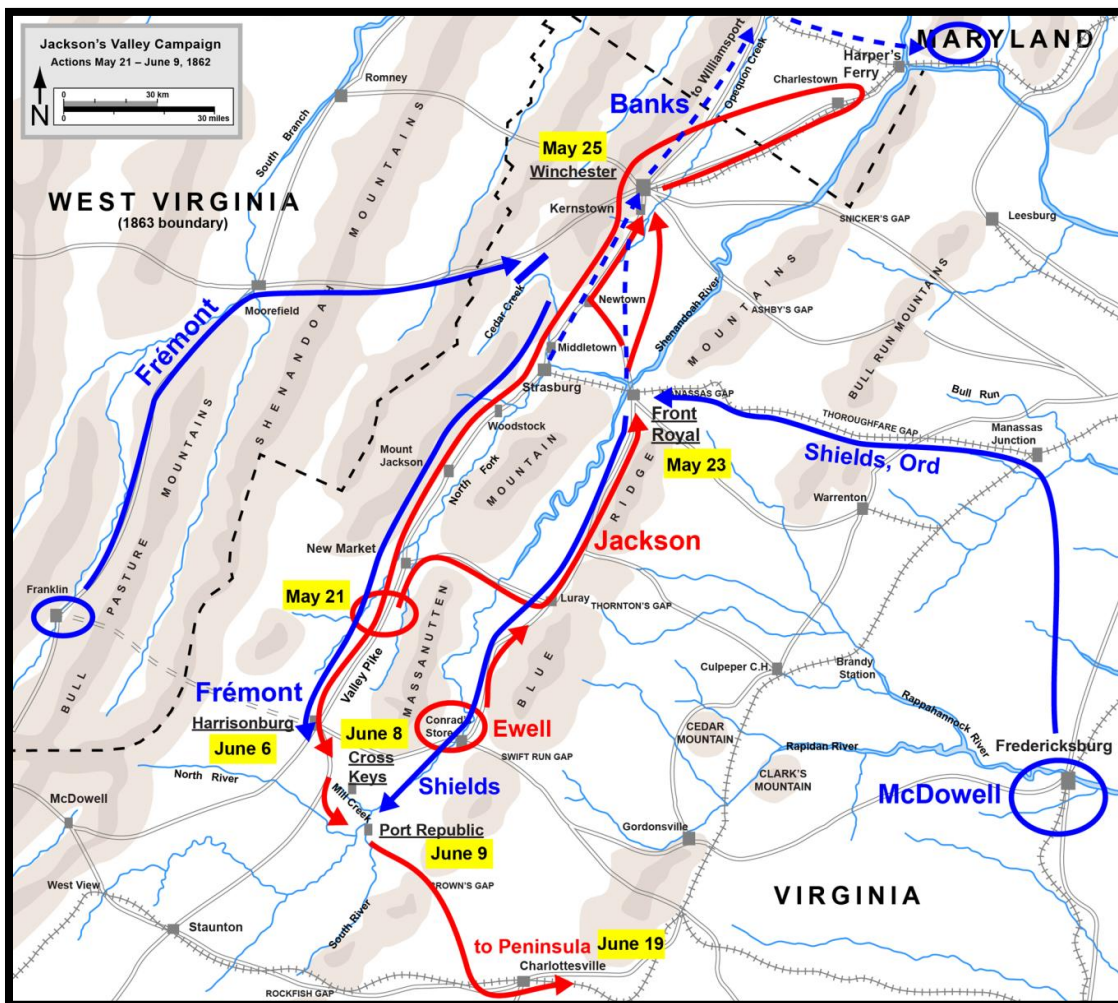
***** The Value of Honor *****

. . . and an Officer is so absorbed by the sense of responsibility for his men, for his cause, for the fight, that the thought of personal peril has no place whatever in governing his actions. The instinct to seek safety is overcome by the instinct of honor.

Major General Joshua L Chamberlain - *The Passing of Armies*, 1915
Bruce Patterson

***** March Program *****

Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign



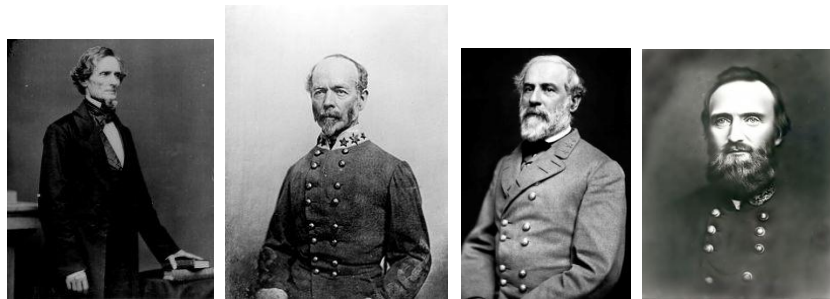
Source: Hal Jespersen, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jackson_Valley_Campaign_Part2.png (accessed March 17, 2014).

Peter Cozzens presented a well reasoned study of the men and events that shaped the 1862 Shenandoah campaign.



Northern Leadership: Abraham Lincoln, Edwin Stanton, Nathaniel Banks, Irwin McDowell, John C. Fremont, and George B. McClellan.

Most of us, especially Southerners, probably believed that the campaign was a victory of a determined general and his men over numerically superior enemy armies. David slew Goliath! To many people, Stonewall Jackson became the stuff of legend and a hero throughout the South. Jackson had willed his small force to march faster, to march farther, and to fight harder than his adversaries. He had achieved his objective: Jackson had tied down large numbers of Union troops in the Valley and prevented their reinforcement of McClellan before the gates of Richmond.



Southern Leadership: Jefferson Davis, Joseph E. Johnston, R.E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson

Cozzens asked that we look closer into the Shenandoah campaign. Was it really the brilliant execution of Johnston and Lee's strategic plan and the tactical execution of that plan by Stonewall Jackson? Was it the ineptness of Banks, Fremont, and McDowell?

Cozzens proposed that this campaign was something of a different nature. To understand the 1862 campaign, Cozzens laid out the events that led to Lincoln's dismissal of George McClellan as General-in-Chief of Union armies on March 11, 1862. In short, Lincoln believed that McClellan had hoodwinked him about the strength of the Union troops left behind to protect Washington when the Army of the Potomac moved to attack Richmond via the Virginia Peninsula. Lincoln, with his Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, not only removed McClellan from overall command of all Union armies, he and Stanton established three separate armies to operate in or near the valley. Nathaniel Banks was given command of the Department of the Shenandoah; John C. Fremont was given command of the Mountain Department in western Virginia; Irwin McDowell was given command of the Department of the Rappahannock. Each of these department commanders reported directly to Lincoln and Stanton. Per Cozzens, Lincoln's control of the strategy of Union arms led to the Union failure in the valley. Lincoln's plan involved the convergence of three armies in an attempt to trap and destroy Jackson between a pincer movement.

Lincoln and Stanton made two basic errors: 1) The Union command was fragmented by the establishment of three departments that had no coordinating communications capability. The

Union commanders were unable to move their commands with the precision necessary to execute their orders from Lincoln. What looked brilliant on a rough map was not necessarily possible due to topography, weather, or condition of a command. 2) Their actions diverted troops from the prime objective: destruction of the main Confederate army defending Richmond. Had McDowell and his 40,000 men been committed to McClellan's drive on Richmond, would the reluctant McClellan have achieved success in destroying the Confederate Army?

Banks, Fremont, and McDowell may not have performed to the best of their abilities, but they were hindered by in some cases, poor supply, and in others cases, orders from Washington which made little sense for the current situation in the field and/or no knowledge to the actions of the other departmental commanders. When John Pope was given command of the three departments on June 26, 1862, Edwin Stanton informed Pope that the forces, that were to become the Army of Virginia, had been directed from Washington by the president and himself. Stanton said that the responsibility for the valley debacle rested not with the generals, but with Lincoln's and his directions.

Was Stonewall Jackson's performance in the valley the stuff of legends? He achieved his objective. Jackson's victories also came at a low-point for Confederate arms. His victories did revive the morale of the Confederate soldier and civilian population. Jackson's actions may have instilled resolve to carry on the fight for Southern independence in the hours of serious danger. Jackson's actions in the valley did reflect soon weaknesses. Jackson's preference to piecemeal commit troops to a battle and his hard handling of his men and himself would have serious consequence for Confederate arms during the coming Seven Days Battles around Richmond.

provided fascinating details of this important action during the war's 2nd year.



Peter Cozzens, in *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign*,

Editor

******* Difference Makers *******

Editor Note: Do not be dissuaded by the length of the attached article. Cozzens shared a story about a truly remarkable man who commanded a Confederate POW camp in Cahaba, Alabama. Unlike Andersonville, Elmira, and other Confederate and Union camps, Cahaba had a prisoner **mortality rate of 3%** - read the entire story to learn about Howard Henderson and his most unlikely story.

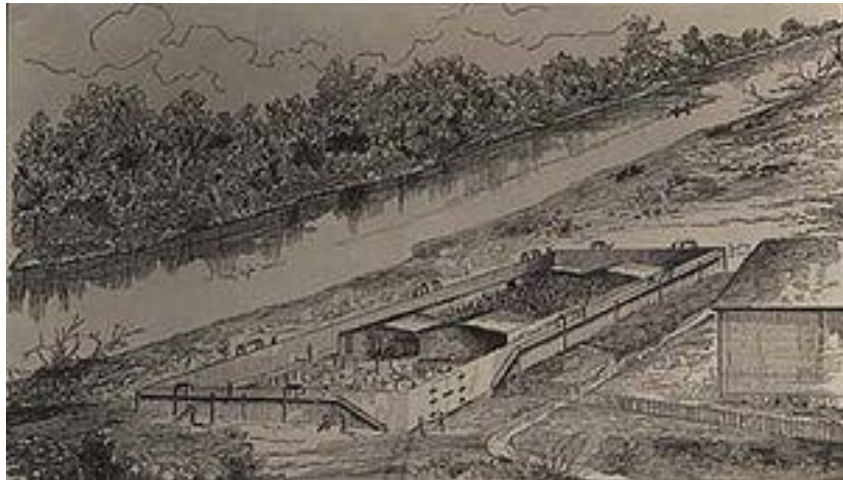
Commandant Howard Henderson, C.S.A

by
Peter Cozzens

On the afternoon of May 11, 1883, Hannah Simpson Grant died quietly in her home in Jersey City, N.J. Her son, Ulysses S. Grant, arrived later that day. To her pastor, the Rev. Dr. Howard A.M. Henderson, Grant entrusted arrangements for the funeral. Grant wanted no mention made of his own success. He asked Henderson simply to eulogize Hannah Grant as a "pure-minded, simple-hearted, earnest Methodist Christian."



Henderson



Camp Cahaba, Alabama

The man in whom General Grant placed so much trust had served honorably during the Civil War—but on the side of the Confederacy, and as the commandant of a prison camp. Soldiers in both armies despised Civil War prisons as places of hunger, harsh treatment and deadly diseases, and for the most part they excoriated prison commanders as cruel and cold-hearted. But Henderson was an exception. Gentle and genuinely concerned with the welfare of inmates, Henderson achieved with resources nearly as limited as those at Andersonville, Ga., something the commandant of that prison, Henry Wirz, couldn't: He kept his inmates alive. Under Wirz's regime, nearly a third of the 41,000 prisoners at Andersonville perished. At Cahaba, the mortality rate was 3 percent. According to Federal figures, only 147 of the 5,000 inmates died. The average mortality rate in Confederate prisons was 15.5 percent; in Union prisons, 12 percent.

There was little in the appearance of Cahaba, or in the conditions beyond Henderson's capacity to control—overcrowding, rats, lice and sometimes meager food—to suggest to new inmates their fate would be any different than that of their less fortunate countrymen at Andersonville.

But Henderson's humanity gave them hope.

Wisconsin cavalryman Melvin Grigsby entered Cahaba in the spring of 1864. His first stop was a room near the entrance. There Captain Henderson ordered him to surrender all his

valuables, promising to keep a list and return everything "at the proper time." Grigsby was skeptical; surrendered possessions had a way of disappearing in prisons. But when Grigsby and several hundred other prisoners were transferred to Andersonville, Henderson not only returned all the prisoners' valuables, but also expressed his "sorrow and shame for the horrors of that shameful place."

The Confederates established Cahaba Federal Prison in May or June 1863 in an unfinished red-brick warehouse on the west bank of the Alabama River in Cahaba, Ala., the seat of Dallas County. The town owed its name to the Cahaba River, which looped around the northern side of the town before emptying into the Alabama. The prison's informal name was Castle Morgan, after famed Confederate cavalryman Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan. The brick walls of the warehouse stood 14 feet high and enclosed 15,000 square feet. An unfinished roof left 1,600 square feet in the center exposed to the elements.

Under the roofed portion of the warehouse, Confederate prison authorities built 250 bunks of rough timber, one atop the other. Around the warehouse they raised a 12-foot wooden stockade with a plank walkway at the top for the guards. At the southeast corner of the stockade they built a four-seat privy. Drinking water for the prisoners came from an artesian well emptied into an open gutter, which flowed 200 yards through town before entering the stockade.

In July 1863, Henderson became commandant of Cahaba. A month later he also was named an agent for the exchange of prisoners, a duty that often took him away from the prison. Henderson understood Northerners. He had graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and studied law at the Cincinnati Law School. Preferring the church to law, he became a Methodist minister after graduation. Henderson was determined to run Cahaba with as much compassion as discipline and good order permitted, but the prison nonetheless had its share of problems. Quarters were cramped. In March 1864, there were 660 prisoners at Cahaba, a third of whom had to sleep on the dirt floor of the warehouse for lack of bunks. The polluted water supply posed a grave health threat. Prison surgeon **R.H. Whitfield** told the Confederate medical department that, in its course from the artesian well to the warehouse, the water "has been subjected to the washings of the hands, feet, faces, and heads of soldiers, citizens, and negroes, buckets, tubs, and spittoons of groceries, offices, and hospital, hogs, dogs, cows, and filth of all kinds from the streets and other sources."

In response to Whitfield's complaint, the quartermasters installed pipes to replace the open ditch, which gave the prisoners clean water to drink. But in the summer of 1864, General Grant ordered a halt in prison exchanges, and the population of Cahaba grew to 2,151 in October. Conditions deteriorated sharply. Cahaba became the most overcrowded prison, North or South. Each prisoner had only 7.5 square feet to call his own; those at incarcerated Andersonville had 35 square feet of space per man.

Rations dropped severely both in quantity and quality. The average daily issue became 12 ounces of corn meal, ground together with cobs and husks, 8 ounces of often rancid beef or bacon, and occasionally some bug-infested peas. Prisoners were not starved at Cahaba, but they were hungry enough that a gnawing desire for food permeated their dreams. "The same experience was often repeated," remembered Sergeant Jesse Hawes of the 9th Illinois Cavalry.

"Go to the bed of sand at 9:00 p.m., dream of food till 1:00 or 2:00 a.m., awake, go to the water barrel, drink, and return to sleep again if the rats would permit sleep."

The number of rats at Cahaba grew at about the same rate as the prison population until, Hawes said, they became a veritable plague. They burrowed into every corner of the warehouse and swarmed through the prison yard. "At first they made me nervous, lest they should do me serious injury before I should awake; but after several nights' experience that feeling was supplanted by one of irritation—irritation that they should keep waking me up so many times during the night, an annoyance that at length became nearly unendurable."

But rats were a minor annoyance when measured against the infestation of lice, from which no prisoner was free. Private Perry Summerfield said that after his first night at Cahaba he was so covered with lice that his clothes "looked more like pepper and salt than blue." Lice "crawled upon our clothing by day, crawled over our bodies, into the ears, even into the nostrils and mouths by night," Hawes said.

Hardest to bear were the human vermin that infested the prison. The most pernicious came from among the prisoners themselves. Called "muggers," they were a well-organized group of robbers for whom newcomers were the targets of choice. The muggers would beat a man senseless or render him defenseless with a rag of chloroform (obtained from guards in exchange for part of the muggers' profits), and then strip him bare of money, watch, jewelry and keepsakes that the prisoner had managed to secrete from prison authorities.

It took a giant of a man named Richard Pierce to bring order. Standing nearly 7 feet tall, with chest and shoulders "enormous for a man of his gigantic dimensions," the young private from the 3rd Tennessee Union Cavalry was so mild-mannered that his fellow inmates regarded him as an overgrown boy—until four muggers robbed his best friend. "Big Tennessee," as the prisoners called Pierce, tracked down the robbers and knocked all four of them senseless. Big Tennessee's two-fisted justice rallied the prisoners and cowed the muggers, the worst of whom joined the Confederates to escape retribution from their former victims.

There ironically was less human vermin among the guard force of 179 poorly trained conscripts. Most of the Confederates were humane and well-intentioned, but at least two stood out as cold-blooded murderers. One named Hawkins shot three men in one week from the walkway atop the stockade wall, recalled several former prisoners, "without the least shadow of reason or excuse for the murders."

Another assassin, a boy not more than 16 whom the prisoners dubbed "Little Charley," killed three prisoners. He shot two men at close range and bayoneted a third in the cooking yard, again for no apparent reason. One day Little Charley failed to appear on duty as expected, and among the prisoners the rumor arose that he had been granted a furlough for his "zeal as a guard." Hawes decided to find out for himself. "Was he given a furlough because he killed so many prisoners?" Hawes asked a friendly guard. "I guess so," drawled the Southerner, "that's what we 'uns allers heerd."

That murder would be condoned, much less rewarded, under Henderson's regime was unthinkable. But on July 28, 1864, a new officer had arrived to command the military post of Cahaba and the prison guards. He was Lt. Col. Samuel Jones, a cruel man who had been twice captured and paroled, and then passed over for command of his regiment. Jones came to Cahaba with the professed intention of seeing the "God-damned Yankees" suffer.

The commander of military prisons in Alabama and Georgia, Brig. Gen. John H. Winder, complained to Richmond that he had not requested, nor did he want, Jones at Cahaba. The inspector general's office opposed divided authority at prison camps and sided with Winder. They looked into Jones' records and found no orders assigning him to Cahaba, but he nonetheless remained at the prison. Henderson's duty as exchange agent took him away from Cahaba frequently. In his absence, Jones was in charge.

Jones instituted a unique form of punishment and applied it for violations of serious prison regulations. On a ladder resting against the outer wall of the stockade, Jones forced prisoners to grasp a rung just high enough so that their feet barely touched the ground, and then sustain their weight by their hands for a prescribed number of minutes. There certainly were worse forms of punishment in Civil War prisons, many of which were inflicted with less cause, but to men accustomed to Henderson's moderate discipline, Jones' methods seemed barbaric. Amanda Gardner, whose home stood just outside Cahaba Prison, also found Jones' behavior reprehensible. Gardner was a "thorough Rebel" who already had lost a son in the war and believed in the righteousness of the Southern cause, said one prisoner, but she abhorred brutality. When she demanded Jones cease punishing prisoners near her doorstep, the colonel rebuked her. "Your sympathy for the damned Yankees is odious to me," Jones told her. "Now bear yourself with the utmost care in the future or you shall be an exile." But Henderson intervened and endorsed all Gardner had done. After that, Jones left her alone.

Gardner did far more for the prisoners than protest cruel punishment. Soon after the prison opened she began sending gifts of food, which her young daughter Belle slipped through cracks in the stockade wall with the connivance of friendly guards. When winter came, she took up every carpet in her house and cut them into blankets in order to "relieve the suffering of those poor prisoners." Gardner lent the prisoners books from a large and varied collection that an uncle had left her. Prisoners had only to send a note by a guard to Amanda or Belle in order to borrow a book from the Gardner library.

The good effect Gardner's books had in alleviating tedium, which could sap a man's will to live, contributed to the low death rate at Cahaba. Relatively good sanitation also played a role. After Whitfield's report, water entered the camp in pipes rather than an open gutter. The water closet at the southeast corner of the stockade prevented human waste from contaminating the water supply.

The final factor favoring survival was the prison hospital, located in a rambling, two-story hotel called Bell Tavern that the Confederacy commandeered to serve both guards and prisoners. There were never quite enough cots to go around, but chief surgeon **Louis Profilet** and prison surgeon Whitfield treated Confederates and Northerners with equal consideration. Medicine was seldom in short supply. Men died in the Bell Tavern hospital, but not for want of care.

Neither did they die for want of effort by Henderson. In September 1864, Henderson, now a colonel, proposed a special exchange of 350 of Cahaba's inmates. The Union district commander, Maj. Gen. Cadwallader C. Washburn, forwarded the request to the commissary general of prisoners along with a favorable comment on Henderson's management of Cahaba. The proposal made its way to Grant, who denied it as part of his larger policy of prohibiting prisoner exchanges. As winter neared, Henderson suggested the Federals send a ship up the Alabama River under a flag of truce and deliver supplies to the prisoners. Henderson and Washburn overcame the reservations of their superior officers, and in December a Union steamboat offloaded at Cahaba 2,000 complete uniforms, 4,000 pairs of socks, 1,500 blankets, medicine, writing papers and envelopes, and a hundred mess tins.

Henderson had done his best. But the prisoners wanted food more than supplies, and most bartered their new clothing to guards for extra rations. When the food was gone, wrote Henderson sadly, the prisoners were left with the same "scanty clothing and ragged blankets in a climate particularly severe in winter."

In December, Cahaba was cursed with the arrival of a prisoner who nearly cost several dozen innocent men their lives. He was Captain Hiram S. Hanchett of the 16th Illinois Cavalry. Moments before Confederate cavalymen captured him near Nashville, Hanchett had shed his uniform and donned civilian clothing, on the mistaken assumption that the Rebels would let civilians go. Hanchett further incriminated himself by adopting an alias. As he marched into Cahaba, Hanchett knew that he had made himself subject to conviction and execution as a spy. To save himself, Hanchett concocted an absurd escape plan. He told a handful of prisoners his true identity and offered to lead them to the Confederate arsenal at Selma to steal weapons, and then another 125 miles to Federal lines at Pensacola, Fla. In the early morning hours of January 20, 1865, Hanchett and his co-conspirators overpowered the nine guards on duty and shoved them into the water closet.

Hanchett's band never made it beyond the gate. The corporal of the relief saw the scuffle and called for help. Hanchett yelled into the warehouse for 100 "men of courage" to join him in rushing the gate. No one responded. Jones entered the prison with cannons and 100 guards, threatening to blow Hanchett and his men "from hell to breakfast."

One of his coterie let slip that Hanchett was a Union officer, and Henderson wrote to the War Department for permission to court-martial him as a spy. His letter got lost in the crumbling bureaucracy of the dying Confederacy.

Henderson left Cahaba permanently in January 1865 for Union-held Vicksburg, there to dedicate himself to duties as agent for prisoner exchanges.

No sooner had Henderson left than a natural disaster of the first order confronted Jones. Late February downpours pounded the prison and surrounding country, and on March 1 the Cahaba River roared over its banks. A torrent of water swept through town and into the stockade. The water closet backed up, and by nightfall the prisoners found themselves waist-deep in fetid water.

The next morning a delegation of sergeants appealed to Jones to let the prisoners move to higher ground just outside the stockade. Jones refused for fear they might escape. As a dumbfounded Hawes recalled, "The possibility of an escape at that time was an absurdity. The whole country was flooded." Sixty Confederate guards signed a petition on behalf of the prisoners. But Jones stood fast, and the prisoners stood shivering in the water for three days before Jones relented and allowed small details to go out and gather timber to build platforms for the men to stand on. Softening a bit more, he also sent 700 prisoners to Selma to ease the overcrowding.

Nine days later, as the last of the waters drained from the stockade grounds, Jones told the incredulous prisoners that he was going to parole them all.

It was no act of charity on Jones' part; with the war winding down, Grant had relented on prisoner exchanges. For four weeks steamboats plied the Alabama River with prisoners from Cahaba. Most were taken to a neutral site outside Vicksburg called Camp Fisk to await formal exchange. On April 14, Union department commander Maj. Gen. Napoleon J.T. Dana telegraphed the War Department that 4,700 Federals were at Camp Fisk awaiting transportation home. Of that number, he said, 1,100 were sick, nearly all of whom were from Andersonville. "The rest of the prisoners," Dana reported, "are in excellent health, the Cahaba prisoners particularly."

Camp Fisk was the creation of Henderson and his Union counterpart, Colonel A.C. Fisk. When he learned exchanges were to be resumed, Henderson asked Fisk to send supplies to the prisoners at Cahaba. Fisk suggested instead that Henderson bring the men to neutral ground near Vicksburg, where they would be guaranteed ample rations and medical attention. Henderson agreed and enthusiastically hastened the transfers.

But the humane work of Henderson and Fisk ended in an unimaginable tragedy. On April 24, the paddle steamer SS Sultana left Vicksburg crammed with approximately 2,000 Union prisoners, more than half of them Cahaba men. The Sultana had bad boilers and a legal capacity of 376 passengers. Early on the morning of April 27, three of the four boilers exploded, and the Sultana sank near Memphis. Two-thirds of those on board died.

The notorious Captain Hanchett had perished several days earlier. With the war over and no one to convene a court-martial of the presumed spy, Colonel Jones took matters into his own hands and murdered Hanchett. Not long after, Jones vanished from history. Federal authorities tried for a year to find him. If they had, Jones might have been the only Confederate prison official besides Andersonville Commandant Henry Wirz executed for war crimes.

General Dana made certain no harm came to Colonel Henderson. For as long as he superintended exchanges at Camp Fisk, a battalion of Union cavalry was assigned as Henderson's personal bodyguard. But after John Wilkes Booth killed President Lincoln, no Confederate, no matter how well-meaning, was safe within Union lines. So Dana spirited him across the Mississippi River into a camp of Texas Rangers.

Henderson died in Cincinnati in 1912. Obituaries incorrectly said Henderson had been a Confederate brigadier general and omitted any mention of his duty as commandant of Cahaba prison. No matter. Few readers would have recognized the name Cahaba, and none could have found the place had they wanted. After the flood of 1865, the county seat moved to Selma. Within a decade white residents had dismantled their homes and churches and moved away. At the turn of the century a former slave bought the abandoned warehouse and demolished it for the bricks. Cahaba prison remained only in memoirs and fading memories.

Source: Peter Cozzens <http://www.historynet.com/surviving-a-confederate-pow-camp.htm> (accessed March 17, 2014).

***** Trivia Questions for April *****

1 – How many military executions were carried out during the Civil War? More soldiers were executed during the [American Civil War](#) (1861–1865) than in all other American wars combined. Approximately **500 men**, representing both North and South, were shot or hanged during the four-year conflict, two-thirds of them for desertion. The Confederate Articles of War (1861) specified that "all officers and soldiers who have received pay, or have been duly enlisted in the services of the Confederate States, and shall be convicted of having deserted the same, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as, by sentence of a court-martial, shall be inflicted." The General Orders of the War Department (1861, 1862, 1863) directed that those men convicted of desertion were "to be shot to death with musketry, at such time and place as the commanding General may direct."

Perhaps the most notorious mass execution came at the order of Major General [George E. Pickett](#) who, in February 1864, as commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, authorized the hanging of twenty-two prisoners of war—men of the 2nd North Carolina Infantry (Union)—whom he deemed to have been deserters from the Army of Northern Virginia. After the war, United States authorities recommended that formal charges be filed against Pickett, and only the intervention of [Ulysses S. Grant](#) prevented his arrest and trial.

Source: http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/military_executions_during_the_civil_war#start_entry (accessed March 10, 2014).

2 - What is the difference between Strategy and Tactics? You could read volumes about these subjects; however, I found the following simple definition in a business publication. I think that it applies to the use of these word definitions in business, politics, and military situations:

**Strategy is done above the shoulders,
Tactics is done below the shoulders.**

Source: <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2013/01/14/the-difference-between-strategy-and-tactics/> (accessed March 17, 2014).