Meeting Notes – May 30, 2023

The LaFayette Rotary Club held its weekly meeting on Tuesday, May 30, 2023. Rotarian Butch Busby was responsible for the program and invited Alan Hinds to speak to us. Alan Hinds grew up in Mobile and moved to East Alabama eight years ago after 37 years in Indiana and Ohio. A former president of the Indianapolis Civil War Roundtable, his presentations have been to history buffs in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Ann Arbor, the General Lew Wallace Museum Lecture series, and Purdue and DePauw university groups. Locally, he has made presentations at the Opelika and Chamber County libraries and was a speaker in the OLLI bicentennial forum in fall 2019. Hinds is a graduate of Auburn University and holds an MBA from the University of South Florida. After service as a captain in the Air Force, he worked in corporate human resources before retirement.

Mr. Hinds’ discussion covered the battle of Mobile Bay. The battle of Mobile Bay occurred late in the war, August 1864, and pitted two of America’s most distinguished admirals against one another. The conflict between Admiral David Farragut, USN and Admiral Franklin Buchanan, CSN, had all the ingredients for a classic naval engagement.

There was the dramatic dual between ships and fortress (Fort Morgan). There was the clash of ironclads against wooden vessels, the perils of mines, and of a naval squadron taking on a fleet despite being outgunned six to one. There was great seamanship and classic mistakes. There was high heroism and great chivalry.

For civil war historians, the Battle of Mobile gives much more than the legacy of a determined cry, “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead”! It is Alabama’s most significant battle and the war’s most important naval engagement.

By way of a large descriptive poster, battle chart handouts for the audience, and narratives, Mr. Hinds stair stepped the club members through three crucial sequences of the battle.