



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

(BCWRT Board members continue to serve as Acting President for a month until a permanent President is elected. Jim Kane, BCWRT's Secretary, is Acting President for April.)

Sometimes children ask me, "Why should we study history?" That really is an important question. I usually answer, "We should study history to learn about ourselves and our neighbors." The experts say that human beings have not evolved much in the past 160 years, meaning the people of the Civil War were just as smart, and just as dumb as we are. The difference between the people of the past and the people of the present is merely the difference between the challenges that they faced and the challenges that we face today in our lives.



To our great good fortune, we Americans are not engaged in a Civil War right now. However, we have suffered through an unprecedented pandemic that has disrupted the normal lives of everyone and caused suffering in the lives of many people. From the study of the Civil War we can learn what things help a nation recover and what things do not. From the study of the Civil War we can learn what we as individuals and families can do to recover our livelihoods and restore normal relations with our friends, families and communities. As individuals and as a nation we need to

know what to do best when the pandemic abates.

As BCWRT members we have been exploring the effect of the Civil War on the home front. And, some of the great impact of the Civil War at home is similar to the experiences of today.

First, I know that last year in some parts of our country, ordinary healthcare was affected by the need to address the COVID sick. Many people had to delay or completely skip doctor visits in this time. A certain percentage of those people suffered significant consequences because of the pandemic, even though they never contracted the virus. During the Civil War, home front health care was likewise affected by the necessity to address the medical needs of the armies. There were fewer doctors at home and, in the Confederacy, there was an appalling lack of medicine for the people. Through the surviving letters and diaries of the Civil War we learn of this medical disruption and the impact on these individual writers.

Second, as we pass out of COVID we are learning more about the disruption in the development of children who had their educational lives interrupted, and in some areas of our country they have not received in-person instruction in over a year. From our study of the Civil War we have heard mothers write to soldiers longing for the soldier's return, describing the disruption in the lives of their children.

(Continued on page 6)

GENERAL GEORGE THOMAS, THE SNUBBED WINNER

General George Henry Thomas, a native of Virginia, was an undefeated Union general who played a key role in winning the Civil War. His character was extraordinary, and his loyalty to the Union cause was beyond reproach. Yet, he failed to achieve the historical acclaim of some of his contemporaries such as Generals Grant and Sherman - the latter interestingly, his roommate at West Point. The reasons why, including Thomas' exemplary performance in numerous battles throughout the war, are best described by returning guest speaker Brian



Steele Wills, Ph.D., at our Tuesday, April 6 Zoom meeting. Thomas was a winner as shown in victories ranging from

Forts Henry and Donelson in western Tennessee, to Chickamauga, to Missionary Ridge in the Battle of Chattanooga, and to the Franklin-Nashville Campaign. He earned undying loyalty of his soldiers, and when he moved into battle it was certain everything had been done, and that prudence, deliberation, thought, and cool judgment prevailed to ensure success. But after the war he was snubbed from the glory and army leadership positions.

No one is better able to fill in the blanks on Thomas' lack of recognition than our guest speaker Brian Wills, who is the Director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw,

Georgia, where he is professor of history. He is a Civil War tour guide, speaker, and preservationist over a career spanning more than three decades. Wills is an award-winning author of numerous works relating to the American Civil War, including biographies of Confederate generals Nathan Bedford Forrest, William Dorsey Pender, and George Henry Thomas (displaying his horsemanship below).

There are two ways to join the 7 p.m. meeting. The easiest is to connect directly to this link which contains the meeting ID and Passcode: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88313579713?pwd=UHUyaFJSMIRHOEpHa1RDYTIiSk4vdz09>. Or, if you have the Zoom app installed, the meeting ID is: 883 1357 9713 and the passcode is: 340649. Please keep this link in a handy spot, and kindly do not send emails to the round table asking for the information again. Once you join the meeting, you will be placed in a 'waiting room.' You are encouraged to sign in early. Starting about 6:50 p.m., we will begin admitting people from the waiting room to the meeting. It takes several minutes to admit all attendees. Signing in early also reduces potential frustration wrestling with those untimely and annoying computer issues!



THREE COUPLES AT WAR...AND NOT WITH EACH OTHER

A review of Peter Carmichael's March Presentation By Jim Medeiros

The goad for Peter Carmichael's enthusiasm at the March meeting came from the pens of three Civil War couples and their letters. Each couple has lessons to teach.



"We are not going to ever find the truth." Mr. Carmichael maintains that no single experience forms the woof of each couple's war. William and Julia Standard of Illinois contrasted with the common notions of devotion to the Union cause. William Standard, fifteen years older than the average soldier, enlisted partly from a need for income. He did not join for the love of Lincoln or emancipation. In fact, he and his wife discussed whether he would seek imprisonment by Confederates to wait out the war in a camp and duck defense of emancipation. Although he brought along the Copperhead baggage of his life, Standard ended the war having fought throughout it. Fighting didn't make him a Lincoln partisan, however, but he could not besmirch the honor and reputation of a good soldier by betraying the army's cause. His truth had many sides.

"Class matters in understanding these couples." John and Martha Futch of New Hanover County, NC, also contradicted the common conception of Confederate rankers rabid for slavery and their rebellious country. Neither literate, landowners, slaveowners, nor political, the Futches spent the war trading dictated letters where he asked for clothes (such as gloves) and she begged him for money. The war made destitutes of them and, besides their threadbare existence, their missives

repeatedly mentioned the need for John to appear at the medical board to request discharge from the army. The Futches spent no time in their letters extolling war virtues. In fact, eventually the army shot John Futch for desertion.

"Place matters. Location matters." Unlike the Futches and Standards, the Ewells came from the higher reaches of their southern society. Richard Ewell, himself a Confederate Corps commander, still found himself fighting in the war even with his leg amputation after Second Manassas. The amputation, in fact, finally drove his wealthy fiancé Elizabeth Brown into his arms in a pity marriage. Unlike the poor enlisted men, Ewell enjoyed his wife's presence in the Corps Headquarters much to his troopers' chagrin who characterized themselves as "under petticoat government." Marriages of enlisted men contracted before the war cast no doubts on their military careers. Ewell's wartime marriage left his military qualities in question just as Elizabeth's presence in the field did. In contrast, the other corresponding couples frequently talked about being together. A known eccentric, Ewell spent time in his tent pretending to be a bird and practicing bird calls, an activity that might have gotten a poorer enlisted man removed from the Corps. Unlike the letters of the other couples, the Ewells could spend more time discussing promotion and fellow officers.

These three examples of couples at war clearly demonstrate that you must place each in their milieu, their class, location, and rank. The connection of households to soldiers runs through all the battlefields and should never be forgotten no matter how many battlefields you visit.

Ladies' Department – *By Charen Fink*

Time to test your Civil War trivia knowledge. The questions were taken from my book, “**The Civil War Ladies’ Department**,” published in 2017 by Next Century.

Part One

1. Which state was the first to ratify the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution — the amendment that ended slavery?
2. What Mount Vernon, Ohio native is credited for writing “Dixie?”



3. Who was the only woman to have received the Congressional Medal of Honor?

4. Who was the first woman casualty of the war?
5. What popular soldier’s song took its title from a telegraph dispatch?
6. What color were Abe Lincoln’s eyes?
7. Who was known as the “Dragon Lady?”
8. Who was Mrs. Robert E. Lee’s famous great-grandmother?
9. What was “cabbaging” during the Civil War?
10. Nicknamed “Crazy Bet,” this woman gave information to the Federals and was awarded by President Grant with an appointment of postmistress of Richmond, Virginia during his two terms in office.
11. This “Daughter of the Confederacy” fell in love with a New Yorker after the war, but respecting the wishes of many Southerners — including her parents — she did not marry.



1. Illinois 2. Daniel E. Emmet 3. Dr. Mary Walker 4. Judith Henry: she left Washington, DC, to watch the fighting at the first Battle of Bull Run. While sitting with other spectators she was hit by a shell. 5. “All Quiet Along the Potomac Tonight” 6. Gray 7. Union nurse, Dorothea Dix 8. Martha Washington 9. Stealing 10. Elizabeth Van Lew 11. Winnie Davis (pictured)

Part Two - Match the Number with the Correct Letter

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. A use for Calomel | A. A prostitute |
| 2. A bat is also a name for...? | B. Ambulance (pictured) |
| 3. Who was the Calico Colonel? | C. Cure for diarrhea |
| 4. A dead cart | D. A cure all |
| 5. A use for a belly band | E. Mary Ann Bickerdyke |



1. D 2. A 3. E 4. B 5. C

CANNON SHOTS!



History Tours of Fort Caswell are still available! As mentioned last month, now is your chance to jump on the wagon (literally) for a tour around campus. It's a hour-long guided tour to explore the historical aspects of the 250-acre property. Learn about the Battle of the Sandbars, the explosion of the fort, and much more. Part of the tour is walking through the actual fort and batteries. After the tour, you will be able to enjoy a cup of coffee at the new Channel Marker and browse the PX.

Tours are 2 p.m. on April 8; and at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on April 15, April 24, and May 8.

The cost is \$10/person. Limited to 15 people per tour. Face masks are required. Health screening/temp checks upon arrival. Registration is required: email bpace@fortcaswell.com or call 910-278-9501 to book your spot.



Those of you who saw Peter Carmichael's presentation at our March Zoom meeting (147 registrations!) will agree he was outstanding...and would have garnered a standing ovation if we were at Hatch Auditorium. Several have asked about the discount on Peter's book, where much of his talk was derived, "The War for the Common Soldier: How Men Thought, Fought and Survived in Civil War Armies." The publisher, UNC Press, very graciously and generously is offering a 40% discount on the book by using the Promo Code 01DAH40. Simply go to the UNC Press website to order: <https://uncpress.org/book/9781469664033/the-war-for-the-common-soldier/>.

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The Civil War-related "gee-whiz, I never knew that" stories are never ending. Thanks to member John Walsh for bringing this item to our attention. Did you know that the common window screen had its start thanks to the Civil War? Read how this fixture came to be at: <https://www.glessnerhouse.org/story-of-a-house/tag/E.+T.+Burrowes+and+Company>.

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We are sad to report the passing of Cindy Powell, wife of Mike Powell, our immediate past President. Cindy suffered a fatal heart attack February 23. The BCWRT Board made a donation in Cindy's name to the Friends of Oak Island Lighthouse where Cindy volunteered for several years. Repeating what was expressed at the March Zoom meeting, our thoughts and prayers go out to Mike, and his and Cindy's families.



BCWRT leadership continues to receive queries on dues. Presently we are unable to contact you regarding when your membership dues are up for renewal. Best recommendation: send in your check for \$25, along with your current phone and email to: BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461. Thank you!

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER *(continued from page 1)*

And some of the children were jolted out of childhood as circumstances required them to take on adult responsibilities in the family and the community.

Third, in our year of COVID, many people young and old have lived lives of quiet desperation, lonely and alone without the companionship of family, friends and the community. The detrimental effect on the mental health of the nation as a whole in this pandemic has yet to be assessed, but the effect on individuals is well known through the stories of people who have come forward to tell of the impact of isolation on their loved ones. As members of the Brunswick Civil War Round Table, we have heard about the expressive

descriptions of isolation and loneliness contained in surviving Civil War correspondence. Our presenters have reminded us about the many people who suffered on the home front hoping and praying for an end to their living nightmare.

So as this pandemic abates and we look forward to a brighter tomorrow, let us reflect on the lessons we learn from the study of the Civil War, hoping for a blessed future for ourselves, our loved ones and our nation. Here at the BCWRT, we pledge to continue to provide intelligent, thought-provoking presentations and discussions regarding all aspects of the Civil War.

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PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE HAS CIVIL WAR ROOTS

As mentioned at the March Zoom meeting, standing for The Pledge of Allegiance is suspended until we are back at Hatch Auditorium on the Ft. Caswell campus. Were you aware that the pledge has a connection to the Civil War?

A Civil War veteran, Colonel George Balch, in 1885 started a campaign to further unite the county via a pledge to the flag which at that time had 36 stars. His 18-word rendering is the basis of the longer 31-word version we recite today.

The pledge got its first nationwide exposure in October 1892, just 27 years after the end of the Civil War, and the words "one nation indivisible" referred to the outcome of the war. Why 1892? It was a celebration of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America in 1492, and the event was aimed at students like the one shown here.

Several tweaks to the wording occurred in 1923, 1924, and it was adopted by Congress in 1945. The words "Under God" were added in 1954. Again, we will stand and say the pledge when back at Hatch Auditorium.



Captives in Gray: The Civil War Prisons of the Union

by Roger Pickenpaugh and reviewed by E. Gifford Stack

Some people are taken by prisons — not as inmates, but as interested observers. I'm guilty of belonging to this group, as witnessed by visits to Alcatraz, the Tower of London, Andersonville, Vietnam's Hanoi Hilton, and Fort Pulaski in Georgia. And don't get me started about my favorite movie of all time, "The Shawshank Redemption," which led to vacationing with my wife in Zihuatanejo, Mexico, to see if the post card was accurate — it was.

Perhaps my Civil War prison inquisitiveness can partly be explained by spending my formative years growing up in Rock Island, Illinois, site of one of the Union's seventeen prison camps. My old hometown gets frequent mention in Roger Pickenpaugh's "Captives in Gray: The Civil War Prisons of the Union."

The top line statistics of Civil War prisons are probably already well known. Andersonville, only in existence for 14 months, housed 45,000 prisoners in absolute horrible conditions, resulting in 13,000 deaths. An estimated 400,000 soldiers from both sides were taken prisoner throughout the war, and some 50,000 died in captivity. Disease, in prisons and throughout the conflicting armies, killed more soldiers than were lost in battle — for every three soldiers who died in conflict, five more died from disease with dysentery the most fatal. The death rate at Andersonville and other Southern prisons was almost 16 percent, yet the Northern death rate was also high - 12 percent.

Pickenpaugh, who is an expert on Ohio's Camp Chase Prison near Columbus, goes beyond the numbers and data, giving intimate details on what it was like for a prisoners, starting with their transportation to the enemy's lockup, and the subsequent ordeal of living under mostly deplorable conditions.

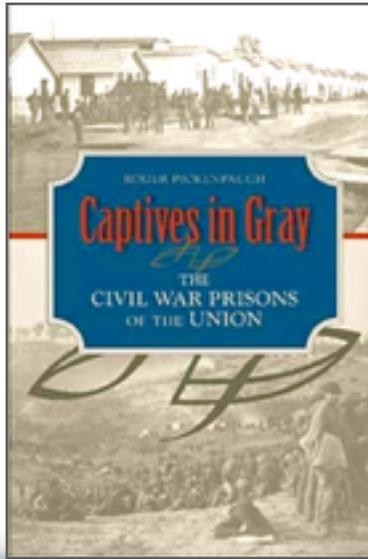
Neither side was prepared to house their captured enemy combatants. In most cases, the federal

prisons sprung up after a large battle forced the creation of a place to house captured Confederates. For example, Point Lookout in Maryland took in the defeated from Gettysburg. Rock Island was built practically overnight to house captives from the Battles of Missionary Ridge and Chattanooga. Because of the haste, the lack of adequate planning, and the ignorance of sanitary necessities, most Northern camps were ill-equipped to house prisoners under the barest, minimalistic conditions.

The author, using the writings of Confederate inmates and official Union records and accounts, describes the difficulty of prisoner life. At first, the prisoner exchanges meant a short stay in the Union facilities. However, that practice stopped in 1863 and subsequently life got very challenging for the captive Southerners. Their guards were mostly untrained, often relying on cruel punishments to keep order — even for the most minor

infractions. Escape provided realistic hope, and Pickenpaugh details the sundry methods employed from tunnels, to disguises, to simply walking away from work parties. The chapter on rations and retaliation is not for the faint of heart, nor are the pages discussing prisoners' health. The final chapter, almost anticlimactically, discusses the release of the Confederates after Appomattox and Bennett Place. One wonders how challenging the trip back home must have been for these men who already suffered so much.

Pickenpaugh wrote a sequel, "Captives in Blue," which is probably as thorough as his examination of the Union prisons. I'll forego reading that book, however. Instead, I think I'll pay a visit to the site of the Salisbury Confederate prison in North Carolina's Rowan County to stand on a historical Civil War landmark, letting my mind wonder — and wander — to reflect on the tribulations of the prisoners interned there, as described so well by Pickenpaugh's writing.



CIVIL WAR NEWS FEATURES BCWRT ACTIVITIES

The April 2021 issue of *Civil War News*, the leading monthly periodical on all things Civil War related, includes articles involving our round table's participation in two worthwhile projects.

Mike Powell, our immediate past President, wrote an account of five interpretive plaques placed around the grounds of Fort Caswell, describing unique features of the fortification. Mike researched and wrote the verbiage on the plaques, and the round table donated \$5,000 for their construction and installation. Besides the 350-word article, there were eight photographs included. (BCWRT's Board of Directors in February approved another \$1,400 donation for two additional signs at the fort.)



The front page article of the April issue of *Civil War News* was written by BCWRT Advisor and frequent speaker Chris Fonvielle, and described the new Sugar Loaf park in Carolina

Beach (featured in last month's *Call to Arms*). Chris' verbiage not only discussed the making of the park — which included a BCWRT \$2,000 donation for interpretive signage — but he gave a vivid account of what happened on the site in the 1865 Wilmington Campaign. Chris's article covered four full pages and included 11 photos and maps.

Thanks and kudos to Mike and Chris for their journalistic prowess, and for putting BCWRT and our area in the spotlight for Civil War enthusiasts across the country to admire...and envy. For

information on print and digital subscriptions to *Civil War News*, please visit their website: civilwarnews.com.



MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The Tuesday, April 6 meeting of the BCWRT will be conducted via Zoom - See page 2.

BCWRT is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, co-founded by Tom O'Donnell and Wally Rueckel, and organized in May 2010.

The BCWRT website, brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com, contains helpful information and is available to everyone, no user name or password required. Our Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/>. The YouTube BCWRT site is located at: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=brunswick+civil+war+round+table.

Contact us at brunswickcwr@gmail.com

Mail Dues Checks to: BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461 (Please include your current phone number and email address.)

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