



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - MIKE POWELL



This is my last president's column. Rather than say good-bye via the newsletter, I really wanted to thank everybody – officers, directors, volunteers, all – person. However, thanks to these challenging times, virtual hugs and handshakes must suffice. Assuming I am still above ground, we will do the in-person version the first night we are back at Hatch. I do need to thank the folks that have made my five years as VP and another five years as president such a joy. Being a part of this round table has been one of the finest things I have ever done. BCWRT has opened so many doors for me that would have otherwise remained closed.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of our membership. You all have my heartfelt thanks. Everyone involved with getting it done every month should take great pride and satisfaction in what we are doing. There is nothing like it elsewhere.

This is my fourth draft of my good-bye. I tried thanking folks by name, but the list was way too long, and I was sure to miss someone. At a later date, I will be around to thank folks one-on-one.

It is comforting to know that BCWRT will remain in good hands. The incoming January board of directors is one of the most impressive of any Civil War round table. Officers Gar Dowell, Cin Brochure,

Gary Krupp, and Jim Kane are all top-notch people, bringing skills that will be needed in this period of growing reliance on computers. Our group of experienced directors backs them up. With Wally Rueckel at the helm we are in good shape. Wally can expect the same dedication that I received, exactly like that he had during his last trip as president. We have an excellent mix of new folks with fresh ideas, folks that have been there for a couple of years, and those of us who have been around for a while with institutional memory. We really have only one guiding principle for BCWRT: put on the best possible event each month, whether for 50 or 500 people. If that single idea remains our legacy, we cannot go wrong.

Folks, this may be a fairly gloomy holiday season. The virus seems to be out of control and we have a clear and present danger. So, let's use it as an opportunity to get back to the origins of the holidays. We may not be able to celebrate and party like we want, but think about how you would feel if someone got sick from a holiday event. With family and Zoom, we will survive. We want to see every one of you when we get back to live events. Make good decisions and be safe.

I can hear E. Gifford, saying, "OK, wrap this up, Mike." I will still be involved in our round table. Like the bad penny, I shall return, but I cannot express my gratitude to all strongly enough. Thanks, and hope to see you soon. *Mike*

Mike, thanks for five wonderful years
leading the largest Civil War round table
in the county.

You are THE BEST!

Signed: Each and every one of the 1,200
BCWRT members.



GENERAL U.S. GRANT VISITS IN DECEMBER

One of the heroes of the Civil War, who became the 18th president of the county, will pay a visit to our Tuesday, December 1, Zoom meeting! Yes, General Grant, portrayed by **Dr. E.C. (Curt) Fields, Jr.**, will join us for what promises to be a memorable evening.

Dr. Fields's presentation is based on quotes from Grant's memoirs, articles and letters that Grant wrote, statements from interviews with Grant, and first-person accounts from people who knew him



or witnessed him during events. His interest in portraying Grant was driven by his deep respect and admiration for him. Fields is the same height and body type as General Grant, and therefore presents a convincing, true-to-life image of the man as he really looked. He researches and reads extensively about Grant to deliver an accurate persona of the general.

An active educational consultant and living historian, Dr. Fields has portrayed Grant at numerous battle reenactments, and was

chosen to portray him at the 150th Sesqui-centennial observations at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Richmond, Vicksburg, and Appomattox Courthouse, the site where General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Grant. He has portrayed the general on film as well as starring as General Grant in the Visitor Center film shown at Appomattox Court House National Historic Park, and in the Discovery Channel's three-part documentary series, "How Booze Built America." Dr. Fields also was featured as General Grant giving his life story on the Civil War Trust website. In addition, he is affiliated with numerous historical organizations in Tennessee and various Civil War associations.

There are two ways to join our 7 p.m. Zoom meeting. The easiest is to connect directly by clicking on this link which already contains the meeting ID and passcode:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81443473805?pwd=WGhUNEd3Rjd6V01OUE8xd0N5VUtWdz09>

Or, if you have the Zoom app installed, the meeting ID is: 814 4347 3805; and the passcode is: 297242. Please keep these methods to join in a handy spot, and kindly do not send emails to the round table asking for the information once again. **Regardless of the method you choose, you will be placed in a 'waiting room.'**

You are encouraged to sign in starting at 6:45 p.m., as it takes several minutes to admit all attendees. Signing in early also reduces potential frustration wrestling with those untimely and annoying computer issues!

Second Guessing Richard Ewell: The First Day at Gettysburg

Ewell's Biggest Mistake: He Wasn't Stonewall

A review of Chris Mackowski's November Presentation By Jim Medeiros

Lt. General Richard Ewell's blessing came with a curse: He learned corps command at the elbow of Lt. General Stonewall Jackson. According to Chris Mackowski, Ewell commanded as if Jackson were there, but even that could not rescue him from his greatest failing--he just wasn't Stonewall Jackson.

If Mackowski thinks Ewell absorbed some Jackson, he is further convinced Ewell takes the blame for Gettysburg failure and protected Robert E. Lee. Down the years Ewell's vilification most importantly protected Lee's reputation. The myth of Lee as the greatest general in a war sadly doomed to failure became a cornerstone of the tale of the lost cause. In spite of the general who could make no error, the South could never have won the war. For Lee's myth to live, Ewell's reputation had to suffer. And historians and armchair generals have obliged Lee's myth down the years.

The first brick in Ewell's wall of shame built on Jackson's reputation for aggression. Repeatedly, Ewell has suffered criticism that he simply wasn't aggressive like Jackson. (Shadows can overarch us for a lifetime. Never mind that once in town, Ewell lead his corps to attack the Federals on the north side.) The next brick we could call cowardice. Some have whispered that Ewell feared to find the Yankees waiting to butcher him. (Again, never mind that Ewell set his troops to fighting immediately in town and again the next day on bloody July 2.) A third brick we call faint-heartedness in numbers. Although Lee

told the generals generally to eschew a major engagement, he gave Ewell leave to press home an attack "if practicable". To shore up flanks Ewell asked if AP Hill could help. Hill, thinking his own men blown from their heavy fighting, declined to assist. Ewell had to detach two brigades to watch Union activity on a flank decreasing needed manpower. The final brick in Ewell's shame said he lacked strategic vision. To this day Ewell stands condemned for not appreciating the strategic importance of Cemetery Ridge and attacking it.

Traditional lore casts Lee as hero with history crediting him with ordering Ewell up Cemetery Hill. Note, however, what orders did Ewell actually hear at Gettysburg? Although they did appear in Lee's written battle summary months later, orders at Gettysburg were all verbal. According to the written battle summary, Ewell was given the option of attacking July 1, however, he declined without better emplacement information and fresher troops.

Ewell, once tarred with the brush of failure, protected Lee's later canonization as the patron saint of the Confederacy, all General Lee's greatness doomed to failure in the face of Ewell's sins in the lost cause.

Chris Mackowski welcomes your Civil War commentary on the blog for Emerging Civil War at <https://emergingcivilwar.com/tag/blog-series/>.

Ladies' Department — *By Charen Fink*

Trivia Quiz Answers appear at the end of the article and were named in past “*Ladies' Department*” issues.

1. At least two groups of women in Georgia formed their own home guard groups, drilling and learning to fire weapons; both groups were named after which Georgia heroine of the American Revolution?
2. Nicknamed “Crazy Bet,” this woman gave information to the Federals and was rewarded by President Grant with an appointment of postmistress of Richmond, Virginia, during his two terms in office. Who was she?
3. Known as “Michigan Annie,” Annie Etheridge served as a nurse with the 3rd Michigan and – due to her valor under fire at the battles of Chantilly and Chancellorsville – is one of only two women to be awarded which medal?
4. 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. What is her name?

5. Constance Cary, a Richmond belle, launched a writing career, the most popular achievement of which was “Blockade Correspondence,” which appeared in the *Southern Illustrated News*.



What were the names of the two characters of her “Correspondence”?

This article is taken from a reprint distributed by Dr. and Jacqueline Stroud at the annual conference of the Museum of Civil War Medicine in Towson, Maryland, on October 2, 2008.

By today’s standards, \$10 won’t really buy much, but on March 6, 1865, it would admit a gentleman and two ladies to the event of the year - Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural ball. Some 5,000 guests danced until the wee hours



of the morning and noshed on an extensive menu that included roast beef, veal, chicken, turkey, quail, pheasant, oysters, salads, fruits, cakes, creams and sweets of all kinds. Music filled the three sparkling

galleries of the Patent Office – today the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery – which was left in shambles by the time the final guests departed.

The next morning, newspapers were filled with accounts of who wore what and who came to the ball with whom. According to one account, Lincoln was dressed for the occasion in his typical somber black attire, with white kid gloves. His wife was dressed a bit more elaborately, in a “white silk skirt and bodice, an elaborately worked white lace over her silk skirts...a most recherché costume.”

(Continued on next page)

The Social Event of the Season

(Continued from page 5)

Receipt for Champagne Punch served by the Lincolns and enjoyed by everyone.

1 qt. champagne, lemon juice, 24 oz. sparkling water, sugar

Blend champagne and sparkling water together. Stir in lemon juice and sugar to taste. Serve in a punch bowl with ice ring. Makes 14 ½ cup servings.

Christmas Carols and the Civil War

1. “The Twelve Days of Christmas” was written in England in 1842 as a schoolboy chant but without music. It only became popular in the U.S. in the 1940s.
2. “Joy to the World” appears in *The New Lute of Zion*, as the tune “Antioch” and has remained unchanged since 1857.
3. “O’ Little Town of Bethlehem” was written by Phillips Brooks after he visited the Holy Land in 1865. The music and lyrics were first published in 1874.
4. “Jingle Bells” was written by James Pierpont in 1857.

References

“No Quarter Trivia”. *Civil War Historian*, May/June 2008, Vol. 4-Issue 3, pg. 19. Dr. and Jacqueline Stroud

from talk on Abraham and Mrs. Lincoln. October 2, 2008.

Trent, Linda. “You’d Better Watch Out; I’m Telling You Why”. *The Citizen’s Companion*, Dec./Jan. 1998/1999, V-Number 5, pg. 18-19.

Answers to Trivia Quiz

1. Nancy Hart (the groups were named the “Nancy Harts”)
2. Elizabeth Van Lew
3. The Kearny Cross
4. Winnie Davis
5. “Secessia” and “Refugitta”



Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good (and healthy) night.

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The second half of our 2020-21 program year will feature more outstanding speakers: Jan - **Philip Gerard**, “The Last Battleground: Understanding the Civil War through the experience of NC”; Feb - **Chris Fonvielle**, “Wilmington Campaign 1865”; March - **Peter Carmichael**, “Three Couples at War . . . and not with each other!”; April - **Brian Wills**, “General George Thomas”; May 4 - **Steven Sam Hood**, “Patriots Twice: Former Confederates and the Building of America After the Civil War”; and May 25 - **Thomas Flagel**, “The Unleashed Plague.”

Schedule for Meeting Announcement and Newsletter

Some new members may wonder about the timing of emails announcing the coming meeting, as well as the one containing our newsletter.

For almost the past three years, the email providing details of the following month's speaker is always sent on the Friday ten days prior to the meeting. The email hopefully entices members to attend and hear a first-rate presenter. Also, now that we are gathering via Zoom, we need to provide the meeting link, ID, and passcode. Starting with our December meeting, we will send this meeting announcement out to members again on the Friday immediately before the meeting. It is hoped that members will keep the Zoom sign-in information handy, so as not to phone or email BCWRT staff for that information, especially on the meeting day when things are a bit hectic getting ready for the Zoom gathering.

The *Call to Arms* newsletter is ALWAYS sent on the Tuesday one week prior to the meeting. Should you want to read a previous edition, simply go to the BCWRT website and click on the "Call to Arms" tab on the left side of the home page.

HOW TO VIEW MEETING VIDEOS

If you unfortunately miss one of BCWRT's Zoom meetings, fear not! Thanks to a dedicated group of computer gurus in our round table, you are able view a video of a meeting using one of three sites.

"On the left side of our Facebook homepage, you'll see a list of files. Just click on the videos tab, and you'll be taken right to a listing of all our videos, including the latest meeting," noted member Ann Birdsall who helps keep our Facebook page current. You do not need a Facebook account to use the site or view the video, she added. However, if you are a regular Facebook user, simply "like" the video tab and you'll get right to the page whenever you log in.



For those of us who are more familiar with YouTube, it's simply a matter of entering "Brunswick Civil War Round Table" in the YouTube search window, and BINGO - you will be shown a listing of all our videos. According

to Pat de Barros, a BCWRT volunteer who helps with our computer needs, including coordinating our Zoom meetings, "The YouTube site requires no sign up and is extremely easy to locate and use. Members can also click



'Subscribe' on the BCWRT YouTube page to be notified whenever a new video is posted."

A third way to view a meeting video is via the BCWRT website. According to Kathy O'Donnell, a board member who keeps our website running, "After a member enters our site, they simply click on the 'meeting highlights' tab on the left and the entire list of monthly speakers appear. Then simply follow the link to access the desired YouTube video."



For any questions or suggestions regarding the meeting videos, please call incoming president Wally Rueckel at 248-252-6844.

CIVIL WAR VIEWS



In October, member E. Gifford Stack rode his Harley to Battery White, located on the Waccamaw River, south of Georgetown, SC. The site, a Confederate artillery unit designed to protect the rice plantations around Winyah Bay, was undermanned and easily captured during the final months of the war. The battery is now on private land but open to the public. Shown are two Columbiads. *(Photos by EGS)*



When you go to RALEIGH, visit BENNETT PLACE!

John Walsh, BCWRT's trip coordinator, believes we are lucky to have so many Civil War sites within an easy driving distance. For example, he recently noted the largest surrender of the Civil War took place at the Bennett farm in nearby Durham, NC, on April 26, 1865, two and one-half weeks AFTER Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House.



Aware of Lee's surrender, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston sent a courier to Union General William T. Sherman offering a meeting to discuss a truce. Several days of negotiations, during which Sherman offered generous terms that were rejected by the Presidential Cabinet (this

was shortly after Lincoln's assassination), eventually resulted in Johnston's surrender on terms similar to those Grant had given to Lee. This agreement ended

the war for the 89,270 Confederate soldiers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Bennett Place State Historic Site includes a visitor center and the reconstructed

farmhouse where the surrender took place, on 30.5 acres, and is less than a three-hour drive from Southport. Hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and is currently open during the pandemic. You should confirm their hours by calling the site at 919 383-4345.

MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The Tuesday, December 1 meeting of the BCWRT will be conducted via Zoom - See page 3.

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/>. Visit both sites to learn of future speakers, trips, and interesting Civil War information.

2020 Officers, Directors, Advisors, and Liaisons

Mike Powell: President & Director

Charen Fink: VP, Director & Ladies' Forum Coord.

Gar Dowell: VP, Director

(Vacant): Secretary and Director

Gary Krupp: Treasurer and Director

John Butler: Director

Kathy O'Donnell: Director

Chuck Roedema: Director

E. Gifford Stack: Director

Peter Carmichael: Advisor

Chris Fonvielle: Advisor

Tom Kehoe: Advisor

Jim McKee: Advisor

Roy Pender: Advisor

Leslie Rivers: Advisor

Wally Rueckel: Advisor

Wade Sokolosky: Advisor

Peter Whalen: Advisor

Max Williams: Advisor Emeritus

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