



## CALL TO ARMS

### Brunswick Civil War Round Table

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January 4, 2011  
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**Location: St. James Community Center**  
**Rt. 211 at traffic light across from the entrance to St. James.**  
**Wednesday, January 12, 2011**  
**Registration: 6:00pm Program: 7:00pm**  
**This is a special one-time location.**

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BCWRT is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization, formed in May 2010 by co-founders, Tom O'Donnell and Wally Rueckel and. It meets the first Tuesday every month except July and August. We currently have 170 members.

## **1863 Happenings**

- Roller skating introduced
- America's 1<sup>st</sup> National Conscription Act passed by Congress
- Ebenezer Butterick invented 1<sup>st</sup> paper dress patterns in U.S.
- National banks were 1<sup>st</sup> organized by Act of Congress
- Song: "When Johnny Comes Marching Home", published by L. Lambert

## **Significant Dates**

1859—Raleigh Workingmen's Association organized.

1860—North Carolina voted for the Southern Democratic presidential candidate, John C. Breckenridge.

1861—May 20<sup>th</sup>, N.C. Convention at Raleigh adopted ordinance of secession.

**We will have a special guest for our meeting in January. A "National Treasure" is how our special guest, Ed Bearss (sounds like "bars") is described. He joins the Round Table meeting on **Wednesday evening, January 12, 2011**. His topic will be "The Vicksburg Campaign."** His career with the National Park Service began in 1954, and he has been recognized by them as more knowledgeable on the battlefields than virtually any other historian. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards in the field of history and preservation. Ed is a prolific writer, editor and author of numerous books. He also provided television commentary on the A&E Network, the History Channel, the TLC Channel, including the Ken Burns PBS series on "*The Civil War*," More information on Ed, go to any search engine and enter "Ed Bearss", or go to [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ed\\_Bearss](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ed_Bearss).

This special presentation is open to the public. The admission fee for guests is \$10. However, if an individual or family wishes to become a member of the Round Table that evening, the \$10 fee will be applied toward the \$25 annual membership fee. Student guests will automatically become Round Table members with their \$10 admission fee. Normally the meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at Trinity Methodist Church, 209 E. Nash St., Southport across from the past office, but because of a schedule conflict it had to be changed for this month only.

**The meeting will be held at the new St. James Community Center, Rt. 211 in Southport, across from the St. James main entrance. Registration begins at 6:00. It is certain to be a most interesting, entertaining and memorable presentation. For additional information, contact Round Table president Wally Rueckel at (910) 253-7382, or [wrueckel@questor.com](mailto:wrueckel@questor.com).**

## **Upcoming Programs**

February 1, 2011: Charen Fink, dressed in period attire, will speak on "Civil War Women: Spies, Nurses, and Homemakers.

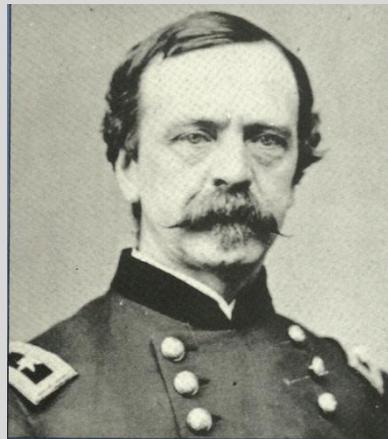
March 1, 2011: Richard Starnes. "Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief."





DAN SICKLES (1819-1914)

W. A. Swanberg titled his biography, *Sickles: The Incredible*, and it is a very proper title for his subject. Before the war, during the war, and after the war, he fell into one controversy after another. Sickles was ambitious to a fault, both politically and militarily. To deal with Sickles, in any depth, would be to get mired down in his lifelong controversies. The purpose of this short article is to introduce you to one of the “characters” of the Civil War. His life was one of the most interesting of the period.



Always political, Sickles was part of the Tammany Hall crowd, so his connections, in New York, were very strong. In February, 1859, Sickles found out that his wife, Teresa, was having an affair with Philip Barton Key, son of Francis Scott Key. He coerced a confession from Teresa and went out to find and seek satisfaction from the offender. Sickles found Key and shot him dead, in front of witnesses, in the shadow of the White House, in Lafayette Square. For his trial, he assembled a legal dream team, including, Edwin Stanton, who entered the first plea of innocent due to temporary insanity. Sympathetic public opinion was with Sickles and the defense won acquittal. New York society was soon turned on its ear, when Sickles took back his adulterous wife, to once again live under his roof.

When war began, Sickles received a political appointment to general rank from Lincoln, early in the war. He was often at odds with whoever commanded above him. Sickles was a New York war democrat, who had a talent for raising recruits. He raised the Excelsior Brigade, a very good unit of New Yorkers. So, Lincoln had to look the other way on many things. By Gettysburg, he had risen to command the Third Corps and served in the Army of the Potomac. Third Corps arrived on the field of Gettysburg, during the night of July 1<sup>st</sup>. They were put into the line to the left of II Corps, and ordered to cover the ground to the Round Tops. This was a crucial part of the Union line that ran from Cemetery Hill to the Round Tops, the long part of the fish hook. The Federal line was unbroken, intact and self supporting. Sickles believed that higher ground along the Emmittsburg Road, was better suited for his corps. And so, he moved Third Corps, out of the Union line, and advanced forward to the Emmittsburg Road, without orders. At the same time, Longstreet launched his attack on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Sickles ran right into the Confederate attack. His attempt to occupy the higher ground on Emmittsburg Road, failed. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock prepared an artillery line to cover Third Corps, when they came falling back in rout, as Hancock knew they would.

Sickles himself lost a leg in the battle. There is a stone marking the spot just behind the Trostle House. The amputated leg is on exhibit in the Army Medical Museum, in Bethesda, Maryland.

Sickles movement to the higher ground, in his front, may have seemed a good idea for Third Corps, but it jeopardized the integrity of Meade's position. It also cut off the men of V Corps at the Round Tops, as they came up, just in time, to occupy the hills, on the extreme Federal left flank. For years afterwards, Meade and Sickles argued over the correctness of Sickles' move. Sickles argued that it was his movement that brought on the battle, so clearly won by the Union. Richard Sauer's book, A Caspian Sea of Ink, covers the war of letters between the two very well.

In 1865, Washington sent Sickles to South America, on a clandestine mission to determine if the Governor of Colombia would approve the colonization, of part of Columbia, by freed American slaves. There are, of course, various tales of whose orders he was under, but, obviously, the plan failed.

President Johnson, in 1867, assigned Sickles to the Carolinas, to implement reconstruction. He was soon relieved of his duties for the overly harsh methods he imposed on the southerners. In 1886, he was appointed to the New York State Monument Commission. In 1912, he was relieved of these duties when it was suspected he stole over \$21,000, in expenditures for the monuments to NY fighting units. It was largely due to the political prowess of Dan Sickles that Gettysburg was set aside as a National Park to honor the Battle of Gettysburg, in 1895. He also lobbied hard to get himself awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on July 2, 1863. However, he has no monument to him personally on the battlefield. Sickles said, more than once, that the whole battlefield was his monument.

**References:**

Sauer's, Richard A., A Caspian Sea of Ink, Butter and Blue, Baltimore, 1989  
Swanberg, W. A., Sickles: The Incredible, Stan Clark Military Books, Gettysburg, 1956  
*Submitted by Mike Powell*

**Around Town Events**

**Southport/Wilmington**

Fort Fisher presents "Glory Enough For All" is part of Civil War 150<sup>th</sup>. This day-long event commemorating the kickoff for the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War in North Carolina will be held Saturday, Jan. 15, 2011 from 10am to 4pm at Fort Fisher State Historical Site in Kure Beach. For more information: [www.ncculture.com](http://www.ncculture.com).

**Travis Lecture at Ft. Anderson on Jan. 18, 2011 Details Battles for Coastal Forts.** At Southport Community Center, local historian and BCWRT charter member Jack Travis, will speak on "Jumping the Gun: The January 1861 Captures of Forts Caswell and Johnston" on Tuesday, Jan. 18, from 7-9pm. Jack is the author of Men of God, Angels of Death: A History of General Lee's Premier Artillery Battery. For more info: call the historic site at (910) 371-6613.

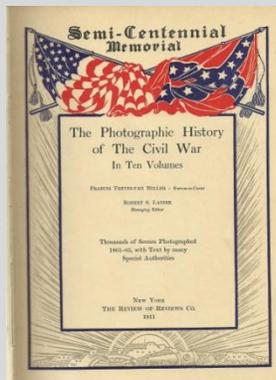
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**FROM THE BOOKSHELF**

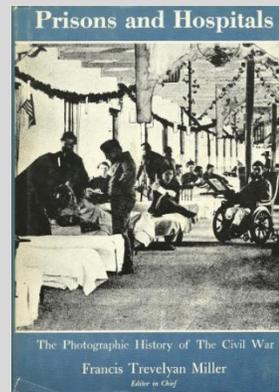
Miller, Francis Trevelyan, ed. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR, 10 volumes, 3497 pages, Review of Reviews Co: New York, 1911.

Francis Trevelyan Miller (1877-1959) wrote books on a wide variety of topics, including World War II, Korean War, exploration and photography. He also wrote the screenplay for the film “Deliverance”, in 1919, about Helen Keller.

Often called the grandfather of pictorial histories<sup>1</sup>, its vast number of photos and narratives make it a valuable addition to any library. It was published to time the anniversary of 50 years since the war began. The work contains 3389 images, many of battlefields, but as the titles show, they cover many aspects of the war. Photos of hospitals, prisons, railroads, and wagon trains that do not often make it into the general histories, are presented here, with text. On the negative side, Miller had some problems misidentifying officers and there are various errors of names and dates. However, the value of these photos and eyewitness accounts far outweighs the flaws and it is a must for civil war enthusiasts.



Title page of the 1911 First Edition



Cover of the 1987 reprint.

**THE VOLUMES:** *The Opening Battle (vol.1); Two Grim Years of War (vol. 2); The Decisive Battles (vol. 3); The Cavalry (vol. 4); Forts and Artillery (vol. 5); The Navies (vol. 6); Soldier Life and Secret Service (vol. 7); Prisons and Hospitals (vol.8); The Armies and Leaders (vol. 9); Poetry and Eloquence (vol. 10).*

(The 1997 reprint edition can be found on many bargain book tables for a very reasonable price.)

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<sup>1</sup> Eicher, David J., THE CIVIL WAR IN BOOKS: An Analytical Bibliography, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1997 Eicher points out some of the errors in the volumes.

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## The Ladies' Department

By Charen Fink

To continue the series on Victorian mourning customs, let's look at the **Undertaker** who gained notice as a professional during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as cemeteries grew with the population. The first ones were carpenters, wood workers & coffin builders. At this time it was not a full-time profession. More than likely he wore long, black, crape (crepe) weepers which hung from a silk hat. This resembled the trailing hood similar to modern academic dress.

**Embalming** grew in acceptance during the Civil War.

- Lincoln was embalmed
- it became the duty of the undertaker
- it was a family affair, wives would be a professional mourner
- it cost \$30 per funeral
- early chemicals used were: salts, metals, alcohol, acids, alkalis, oils, turpentine & powdered spices
- formaldehyde was first used in 1868 & from 1900 thereafter
- by 1900 arsenic was banned for embalming
- today the fluids are: formaldehyde, glycerin, sodium borate, boric acid, sodium nitrate, eosin & water

**Coffins** were strong enough to secure burial.

- they were custom-made wooden boxes, hexagonal at the head, tapered at the feet & lined with white satin
- called "toe pinchers" or "toe squeezers"
- made of pine, cedar, poplar or mahogany
- lids were screwed on
- they were made quickly & rubbed with beeswax & polished with a hot iron
- they could have metallic coffin handles & name plates
- later mass-produced in coffin shops
- in 1848 Fisk was issued a patent for a metallic coffin, it had a glass plate to view the face
- early 1860's—the lid had 2 glass plates with a metal divider to view the entire body, some had a key to lock it
- some coffins were refrigerated with a block of ice that drained into a tube to a pan at the bottom of the coffin
- some even had alarm systems, bells, air tubes & flags to alert anyone in the cemetery that the body was not dead

**Caskets** were rectangular & replaced the coffins; they were designed to make stacking easier.

- female bodies were dressed in a black shroud while men wore their own clothing
- services were held at home or in church

*To be continued next month.*

### References

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- "Victorian Death Rituals" *Ancestry Magazine*. September/October 1999.





## **The Sutler's Table**

The BCWRT now has logo shirts and ball caps for sale.

Shirts come in short sleeve for \$25.00 and long sleeve for \$30.00 in white, blue, and gray colors. We have women's and men's styles. The BCWRT crossed flags logo circled by the words Brunswick Civil War Round Table (in black) is on the left breast of the shirt and the front of the cap above the bill.

Please note these shirts run a bit small and snug. We suggest you order a size larger than you normally wear – e.g., order Large if you wear Medium. Women's shirts are fitted more than men's.

Please use the order form below, marking your choices for each item: **men's or women's, color, size, long sleeve or short sleeve**, etc. Include your phone number and e-mail so we can get in touch with you if we have questions. Mail the form with your payment (Check made payable to BCWRT) or bring it to the BCWRT Sutlery at our monthly meeting (check or cash). If you want to order a man's and woman's shirt please use two forms, one for the man's and one for the woman's. This will ensure proper sizing for each and reduce confusion.

Due to our special pricing on these items we need to order at least 24 at one time and will wait until we have that quantity to place an order.

Return To:  
Ed Ovsenik  
1640 Pierce Street, SW  
Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469  
[ecovsenik@atmc.net](mailto:ecovsenik@atmc.net)  
919-579-9562

Name:				
Phone #:				
e-mail:				
Do you want a	Man's Shirt		Woman's Shirt	
Sleeve	Long		Short	
Size	Small	Medium	Large	X Large
	XX Large		XXX Large	XXXX Large
Color	Blue	White	Gray	