

BRUNSWICK CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

MEETING – DECEMBER, 4, 2012

CIVIL WAR LOGISTICS

SPEAKER - Ron Beavers

Ron opened our eyes to a “good” coming from our Civil War debacle. He points us to fascinating facts that made all the difference. Mule power versus steam (the iron horse) opens boxes full of choices. Basic though is Ron’s platform –an army must travel on its stomach. If you can get the goods to them when and where needed faster/better than the other guy it will spell victory. The South kept sliding more and more behind in this arena. Ron asks us a question that transcends time – How do you feed an Army?

The answer to that question depends on logistics, ingenuity, thinking “outside the box,” and superb leadership. Technological improvements shouted to be heard. Brilliant leaders like Herman Haupt pressed the advantage. First: There was “real time” receipt of information. (Lincoln practically lived at the telegraph office.) Second: rifles trounced smooth bore muskets. Third: McCormick’s Reaper forever changed the deal for “King” cotton. Listen to some familiar words from Civil War terminology. The Southern trains were “gridlocked.” Let’s put some loaded railcars on a barge and “containerize” them downstream. Why not get the goods there “just in time?”

Ron you amazed us with sterling research designed to clarify the importance of technology. It changed the way warfare unfolded – forever. By the way, if there, you would know why the turntable was trumped by the invention of the “WYE.” Thanks, Ron, A GOOD HEAD OF STEAM MAKES US SEEK MORE AND MORE ENLIGHTENMENT.

Submitted by Dan Fink