

BRUNSWICK CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

MEETING – May 2, 2017

“MYTHS OF THE LOST CAUSE”

SPEAKER: Ed Bonekemper

Ed Bonekemper began by giving us a “First” – The real reasons for the Civil War! (There are those who seemingly don’t understand why it happened.) Andrew Jackson was not among them. No negotiator could have pulled off a settlement deal. The \$64,000 question is “Was it States Rights or Slavery?” He gives us a teachable moment. More than 20% of our national wealth between 1855-60 was our slaves. New York bankers loaned heavily to slave holders. There were over 4 million slaves and simply not enough money or desire to liberate them. YES, Ed assures us, it was ALL about slavery.

You can editorialize about the Southern Belle and the idyllic life on the plantation as a wonderful life, but “Uncle Remus” and 1million slaves marched into the Deep South between 1855-1860. Lost cause supporters stressed secession as a right. The Constitution gave them support by saying a runaway slave must be returned to his/her owner.

Ya just had to be there to hear Ed expand on Jefferson’s wording regarding equality. He also has us thinking by asking, “If it was all about States’ Rights, why didn’t they just say so?????????”

Our speaker addresses retrograde Reconstructionism under President Johnson. Ways were found to keep blacks subservient and be made into poorly paid pawns. He suggests that the concepts and character of “Quasi-slavery” did not go away until WW II.

Ed ends with both a scintillating question and answer. Could the South have won the War? YES!! All they needed to get was a tie. The North needed a complete win. Grant (or even someone “Grant-like”) changed the balance. He fought like a bulldog. Lee squandered his manpower and had no replacements. The North did! He cared too much for Virginia and let the Western Theater “ride off into the

sunset.” Longstreet was the scapegoat of Gettysburg. Lee lost that battle by only engaging one third of his troops at any given time. The finality of Alexander Stephens (VP of the Confederacy) cornerstone speech says it all, “The Negro is not equal to the white man.” The storm rolled in but the strong winds of brutal economic war (not complete devastating war) waged by the North signaled a win. The cause, slavery, he concludes, dies a slow, twisting and convoluted death.

Would you want to live in a nation whose founding principle was the right to secede from that body over any contested political disagreement?

THINK ABOUT IT.

Dan Fink