



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table

The President's Corner *by John Butler*



I hope you were able to get some green beer on St. Patrick's Day either before or after the meeting.

Our next meeting will be as usual on the first Tuesday of the month, April 7. Angela Zombek will be returning and talking about post-Civil War activities in North Carolina. This will be an interesting and thought-provoking presentation.

If you cannot get enough Civil War history, here are several things you should consider:

You might want to join the [Emerging Civil War email list](#) and newsletter. It's free. Also, they conduct an annual [Civil War Symposium](#) every August and always at Stevens Ridge, VA (near Fredericksburg). This year the symposium is on August 7-9, 2026. Cost is \$325 plus hotel. They will have 10 well-known CW speakers.

If Gettysburg is your thing, then consider the [Gettysburg College, Civil War Institute Summer Conference](#), June 12-17, 2026. They have all kinds of options for attendance. Contact them directly and ask for a discount. They have usually given discounts to CW Round Tables.

If you want something local, follow Dr. Chris Fonvielle on his [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page. He is always offering local historical places of interest.

Ann Birdsall is working hard to finalize next year's BCWRT speakers. At the present time, we will have General Lee returning along with Ed Gantt, Chris Mackowski and Wade Sokolosky.

John Walsh and Jim Dunn are working on tours for next season. An interesting highlight will be a tour with Chris Fonvielle of Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington.

Ladies, make sure you mark your calendars for October 19th for the Ladies' Forum. Robbin Smith and her volunteers are working to put together another great program.

Remember, if you cannot come to a meeting personally you can always watch it on live stream. Links are in the newsletter and meeting announcements. We also post the live stream link to the meeting on our website the day before our meeting.

If you miss a meeting, you can find it on our website by going to our YouTube tab two weeks after the presentation. We have all our presentations since COVID on our YouTube page.

John

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BCWRT Upcoming Event

Tuesday, April 7, 2026

“Competing Visions of the Post-War World: Military Reconstruction and Southern Resistance in NC”



Questions swirled in the Civil War’s aftermath about what the process of bringing former Confederate states back into the Union would entail. Like, what freedom for formerly enslaved individuals would mean? Or, what role the federal government would play in binding the nation’s wounds? During the Reconstruction era, and specifically the military reconstruction of the South, the issues seemed endless, and eventually, was there an end in sight?

The military presence was crucial in maintaining order, safeguarding the rights of newly freed slaves, and establishing new state governments that recognized the 14th Amendment and equal voting rights for all men. On the one hand, Radical Republicans favored a rather dramatic approach to Reconstruction seeking to punish the South and guarantee civil rights for African Americans through military occupation and constitutional changes. On the other hand, Southern white supremacists desired to maintain white racial domination and actively resisted any advancements for African Americans as it relates to voting rights or social equality. These differing perspectives will clearly be discussed at the next Round Table meeting when the country sought a measure of equality in the post-war South.



We are pleased to have Angela back with another really significant topic that set the stage of our country for years to come. She is Professor of History at UNCW, a Copie Hill Civil War Fellow with the American Battlefield Trust, serves as managing editor of Kent State University Press, a prolific author, and is under contract with the University Press of Florida.

See page 14 for Pre-Registering for the Meeting and the link to watch on YouTube.

March Meeting Review

An Incredible Story Was Revealed

by Chuck Roedema

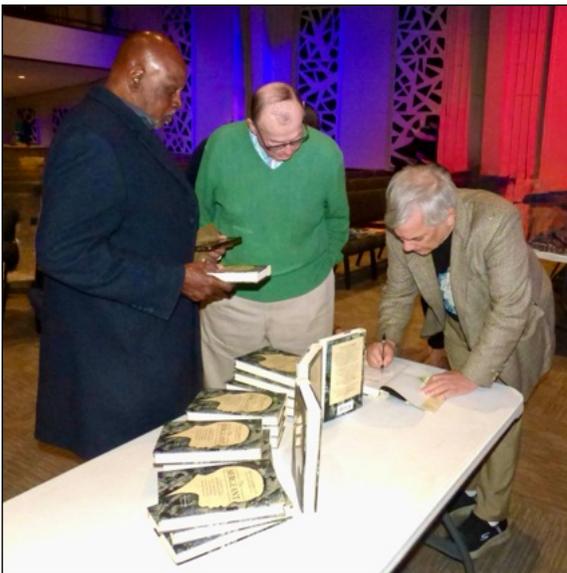
Award-winning journalist Dean Calbreath joined our March 17th meeting and presented a most unusual and intense story. Told with dramatic big screen images, he traced the story of a very young black man, Nicholas Said, and his journey through life from his birth place in Central Africa, through the Middle East, Czarist Russia, most of Europe, then to Canada, and eventually to the frontlines of the Civil War.... starting in Detroit, Michigan! This story spans more than a decade of research, travel, and archive searches culminating in Calbreath's book entitled, "*The Sergeant*".

So much of Said's life involved intimate



dignitaries exposed him to twelve different languages, and he was conversant with all of them. Then in 1863 he joined the Union's 55th Regiment and began a learning process of adapting to life among his black peers, a much different experience than his previous life to date.

Clearly Said's story, as told by Calbreath, fascinated his audience.



relationships around the world with czars, princes, foreign ministers, even Russia's Peter the Great. Encounters with foreign



Photos by Chuck Roedema and Pat De Barros

Fort Caswell Tour

The BCWRT will host two special guided tours of **Fort Caswell** on **Tuesday, April 7**, led by noted historian **Jim McKee**, site manager at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson and one of the region's most respected interpreters of coastal military history.

Participants may choose between **two tour times:**

4:00 pm and 5:30 pm



Each tour will explore the fort's strategic role in the defense of the Cape Fear River, its evolution across multiple eras of American military history and stories about the soldiers who served there. McKee's deep knowledge and engaging style promise an informative and memorable experience for attendees.

Space is limited for both sessions and early registration is encouraged.

To register, please contact Jim Dunn at jdunn44516@aol.com

FREE BOOK GIVEAWAY



You have another opportunity to add to your personal library in April.

Choose whatever you like from all the books on display at the Sutler's Table.

Civil War Art for Sale

Our dated and autographed print by **Mort Kunstler** work titled "**The Fairfax Raid**" is available for sale. This is #0926 of 2,750 limited editions and comes with the Certificate of Authenticity. The print depicts Mosby's raid on Fairfax Court House and subsequent capture of Brigadier General BG Edwin Stoughton.

This piece will be displayed and offered for sale at our April 7 meeting.

BCWRT's asking price for the print is \$125 (OBO). Available on the Mort Kunstler website for \$400.



Print size is 18" x 27 1/2"
(overall size is 23" x 32 1/2").

Fort Fisher Tour, March 2026

By Jim Dunn



History came alive on Saturday afternoon, March 14th, as members and guests of the Brunswick Civil War Round Table gathered for a guided tour of Fort Fisher, led by noted historian **Dr. Chris Fonvielle**. The event drew strong interest from local history enthusiasts eager to explore one of the Civil War's most consequential coastal battlefields.



Under clear skies and mild temperatures, attendees followed Dr. Fonvielle across the fort's earthworks as he recounted the dramatic events of **January 15, 1865**, when Union forces launched the massive assault that ultimately sealed the fate of Wilmington—the Confederacy's last major open port. His commentary blended battlefield tactics, personal stories, and archaeological insights, offering participants a vivid understanding of the fort's strategic importance.



“Fort Fisher is a place where the landscape still tells the story,” Dr. Fonvielle explained as the group stood atop the reconstructed palisades. “When you walk these grounds, you can feel the scale of what happened here.”

Fort Fisher Tour. continued

The tour highlighted key positions across the site, including the massive land-face defenses, Battery Buchanan, and the shoreline where Union naval bombardments once thundered. Participants asked questions throughout, turning the afternoon into an interactive learning experience.



The BCWRT regularly hosts programs, lectures, and field experiences designed to deepen public understanding of Civil War history. Saturday's tour continued that tradition, offering both newcomers and longtime members a rare opportunity to learn directly from one of the region's leading scholars.

For many attendees, the event was not only educational but also a meaningful way to connect with the area's heritage.



Pistol & Powder Measure

Unlike most infantry soldiers who carried muskets, the sailors involved in the second assault on Fort Fisher were armed with pistols and cutlasses. One of the most common pistols in the U.S. Navy was the .36 caliber Colt revolver. The powder measure aided in the reloading process. (On display in the Fort Fisher Museum)

Text by Jim Dunn. Photos by John Butler, John Macey, and Jim Dunn.

The Ladies' Forum & a Civil War Recipe

The Ladies' Forum

Monday, October 19, 2026

Save the date for an evening with Kate Stuart

Kate Stuart was a formidable presence and civic leader in Southport during the Civil War and in the decades that followed. She was also the innkeeper of the most famous hostelry in Southport, the Stuart House.

Sue Crippen, an experienced performer, will portray Kate Stuart and give us an opportunity to hear about her life and events in Southport. Sue is a member of the Southport Historical Society as well as a member of their Living Voices group.

Civil War Cake

Civil War Cake is an eggless, milkless, and butterless cake which was developed during the war when these ingredients were scarce. Soldiers and families relied on pantry staples to create a sweet, spiced cake that could be made with limited resources.

This cake is more than a dessert; it represents ingenuity and resilience. Despite limited ingredients, cooks created flavorful cakes that could be shared with family or sent to soldiers, preserving a sense of comfort and normalcy during difficult times.



Foodblogalliance, shared by Robbin Smith

Ingredients:

2 cups brown sugar
1 cup water
1 cup raisins
¼ cup vegetable shortening
1 tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp ground cloves
3 cups flour
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
½ cup chopped walnuts
(optional)

Instructions:

1. Add the first seven ingredients to a heavy gauge saucepan and bring to a boil.
2. Cook gently for two minutes and remove from heat. Let cool until mixture is comfortably cool to your finger.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
4. Grease and flour two loaf pans.
5. Sift together flour, salt, baking soda, and baking powder.
6. Add the dry ingredients to the sugar mixture. Beat well.
7. Stir in walnuts.
8. Bake for 45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out of center clean.
9. Cool in pan ten minutes and then turn out on plate and cool completely.

Sarah Emma Evelyn Edmundson Seelye (1841-1898)

Sarah Seelye was born Sarah Emma Evelyn Edmundson in New Brunswick province, Canada, in December 1841. To avoid an unwanted marriage, she ran away from home when she was seventeen, disguised as a boy. She continued her male masquerade as a publisher's agent in the midwestern United States and, on May 25, 1861, enlisted in Company F, Second Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment, under the alias Franklin Thompson.



For nearly two years she served in the Union Army undetected, with assignments including male nurse, regimental mail orderly, and brigade postmaster, and on special assignments for the secret service. Ironically, in the secret service duty she penetrated Confederate lines "disguised" as a woman. Fearing her guise would be discovered when she became ill with malaria in 1863, she deserted and resumed a normal existence in Ohio as a female. After regaining her health she again volunteered as a nurse, but this time with the Christian Sanitary Commission at Harper's Ferry, and as a female.

Under a shortened version of her maiden name, S. Emma E. Edmonds, she wrote a fanciful, but highly successful, account of her experiences in the army, *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* (1865). The popularity and exposure she gained from the book and its revelation that she had deserted the army at one time led the government to cancel her pension. She later married a childhood neighbor, Linus Seelye, and had three children. A congressional bill in 1884 recognized her service to the Union and granted her a pension of twelve dollars a month. The charge of desertion from the army was removed by Congress in 1886.



In the early 1890s the Seelye family moved to La Porte, Texas, and on April 22, 1897, Sarah Seelye became a member of the McClellan Post, Grand Army of the Republic, in Houston, Texas -- the only woman member in the history of the GAR. At the time of her death Seelye was writing her memoirs of the Civil War. She died in La Porte, Texas, on September 5, 1898. Three years later, at the insistence of her fellow members of the McClellan Post, her remains were transferred to the GAR plot in the Washington (German) Cemetery in Houston.

From [Texas State Historical Association](#). Shared by Robbin Smith



As young Victorian girls became ladies, they were encouraged not to wear any make-up because it was not considered respectable. It was fashionable for young ladies to look sweet and demure. A very white skin could be achieved by drinking vinegar.

From [The Civil War Ladies' Department](#) by Charen Bishop Fink

Uneasy Peace: 161st Anniversary of Surrender Commemoration

Saturday, April 25, 2026, 11 am – 3 pm

Bennett Place State Historic Site
4409 Bennett Memorial Rd
Durham, NC 27705

Tickets must be purchased at the door the day of the program.
\$5 adult, \$2 child, senior citizen, or military.

This commemorates the surrender negotiations at Bennett Place that led to the largest surrender of the American Civil War. Learn more about how Generals Johnston and Sherman's three meetings at the Bennetts' home reflected the broader national debate over how to reunite the nation and remake the United States without slavery. Explore how veterans, civilians, and freed people alike experienced and thought about the end of the American Civil War and what would come next.

This program includes several costumed interpretation events and displays.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- 11:00 am The Road to Bennett Place - History Talk
- 1:00 pm The Story from the Land - Environmental History Tour
- 2:00 pm Surrender & Freedom Stories Presentation
- 2:30 pm What Comes Next? - History Talk

SURRENDER VIGNETTES:

Limited spaces available inside the Bennett home! Be in the room where it happened while our site historians walk through the surrender negotiations.

Features Sherman and Johnston reenactors. (15 minutes)
Time slots: 11:30, 11:50, 12:10, 1:20, and 1:40.

ONGOING STATIONS:

*Explore at your own pace from 11 am to 3 pm.
Most stations include hands-on education.*

Engineering: Explore how Sherman's army navigated roads and rivers on their journey through the Carolinas.

Signal Flags: Learn how armies communicated.

Morse Code: Featuring the local HAM Radio Operators club.

US and Confederate soldiers at the end of the war.

The Battle of Bentonville *Seminar in the Woods*

Blue & Gray Education Society

2-Day Seminar

March 12-13 or April 3-4, 2026

Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site

Cost: \$25 per day

Historian Wade Sokolosky

Every Battlefield has a Story to Tell

For more information, contact:

Wade Sokolosky

BgesExDir@gmail.com / (434) 770-7325

All Proceeds Support Future Battlefield Interpretation

Wilmington Historical Sites

*Wilmington is home to several historical homes and museums such as these three.
Click on the names for links to their sites.*

[Latimer House](#)

126 South Third St, Wilmington, NC
Tuesday - Saturday, 10 am - 3 pm
Call: (910) 762-0492

[Bellamy Mansion](#)

503 Market St, Wilmington, NC
Monday – Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm
Call (910) 762-0570

[Burgwin-Wright House](#)

224 Market St, Wilmington, NC
Monday – Saturday, 10 am – 4 pm
Call (910) 762-0570

Meeting Photo Gallery

Photos From the March 2026 Meeting

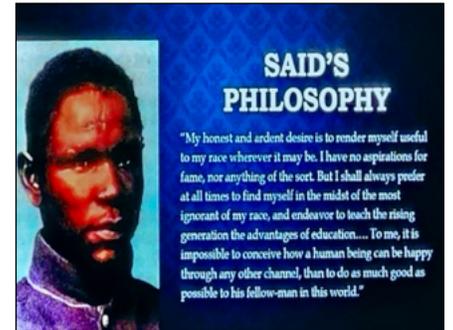


"The Sergeant, The Incredible Life of Nicholas Said"
with Dean Calbreath



Said's Philosophy

"My honest and ardent desire is to render myself useful to my race wherever it may be. I have no aspirations for fame, nor anything of the sort. But I shall always prefer at all times to find myself in the midst of the most ignorant of my race, and endeavor to teach the rising generation the advantages of education... To me, it is impossible to conceive how a human being can be happy through any other channel, than to do as much good as possible to his fellow-man in this world."



The speaker was beyond terrific. The subject was totally new and so very interesting. Goodness, a man who spoke 9 languages and yet bigotry here in US limited him. The military aspects were amazing.

*Really enjoyed and once again sooooo grateful to get from afar ~ Thanks,
Kendra Maxwell*



Pictures by Chuck Roedema

Doug Kesling Relates Dramatic, First-Hand Account of the Recovery of the USS Monitor

On March 12, the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table in Wilmington was privileged to experience a first-hand account of the recovery of artifacts from the USS Monitor, the little “cheese box on a raft” that revolutionized naval warfare. Doug Kesling was mission coordinator and diving safety officer of the civilian component of the team that raised the 120-ton turret of the Monitor in 2002. Hearing an authoritative first-hand account of the challenging mission, superbly illustrated with many of Doug’s own photos, was a riveting experience.



The effort to locate, investigate and recover artifacts of the iconic USS Monitor is an ongoing, decades-long, multi-million dollar effort. On December 31, 1862, USS Monitor was caught in a storm and sank 16 nautical miles off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, in more than 230 feet of water. The vessel went down stern first, turning over so that its revolutionary 120-ton revolving gun turret separated and became pinned under the ship on the seafloor. Monitor’s remains were discovered in 1973, confirmed in 1974, and in 1975 the wreck was placed under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with the establishment of the Monitor National Marine

Sanctuary. Artifacts are being conserved and interpreted at the Mariners Museum in Newport News, Va.

The U.S. Navy and a civilian team of divers and underwater archaeologists made the harrowing, deep-water dives necessary to map the wreck and develop plans to recover major artifacts including the propeller, engine and, ultimately, the gigantic turret. The Navy provided much of the hardware, including a huge barge-mounted crane and did much of the work necessary to rig the turret and other artifacts for lifting to the surface. In 2001, Monitor inventor John Ericksson’s 30-ton vibrating, side-lever engine was brought to the surface.

Sixteen U.S Navy sailors perished in the wreck of the Monitor and the remains of two were discovered in the turret of the ship. Imagine yourself 230 feet below the surface of the turbulent currents off Cape Hatteras, working quickly to document the state of the wreck before it is disturbed by the recovery and suddenly seeing the remains of those two men. Doug Kesling can tell you about it because he was there.



By Bill Jayne, Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

Local Events

Southport Historical Society Programs

Second Tuesday Talk

Musette Steck

Tuesday, April 14, 2026
10:00 am

Margaret and James L. Harper, Jr. Library
101 W. Moore Street, Southport.

Local historian Liz Fuller will present “Dunbar Davis and the Sea Island Hurricane of 1893,” a compelling look at one of the region’s most dramatic rescue stories. Davis, who served as Keeper of local Life Saving Stations for more than 30 years, is credited with saving numerous lives. During the devastating hurricane of 1893, he led efforts to rescue crews from four shipwrecks along the coast.

This program highlights both the perilous conditions faced by coastal communities and the courage of those who risked their lives to save others.

Free. Reservations Required: 910-457-6237

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

**“For Twenty Dollars in Gold,
A Story of the Civil War”**

Presented by Carl Ward

On April 9, U.S. Army Colonel A. Carl Ward will present “*For Twenty Dollars in Gold, A Story of the Civil War*,” based on his book of the same name, a carefully documented narrative that reflects historic facts about southeastern North Carolina from both a soldier's view during the war and a family's view about surviving back home.

Carl crafted the book from the starting point of discovering long forgotten letters in the attic of his grandmother’s home in North Carolina. In Carl’s words, “The novel is told from the documented view of a man and his family, all conflicted by circumstances created by others, for causes they did not share, that spun out of control, all for a war they did not seek.” Follow Private James Ward, who enlisted for the bounty of twenty dollars in gold, on this epic journey through American history, on places and battlefields near and far away, with intense victories and tragic defeats, providing fleeting glory and tragedy, resulting in peace and a return to a devastated home and a new life in rural North Carolina. James served in the legendary 26th North Carolina Infantry Regiment. The regiment was formed in August 1861 in Raleigh and served throughout the war, surrendering at Appomattox with Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865.

Thursday, April 9, 7:00 pm

St John’s Episcopal Church
1219 Forest Hills Dr., Wilmington

The Calling Card



**The Monthly E-Newsletter of the
Society for Women and the Civil War**

<http://www.swcw.org>

Board of Directors Meeting

There was no Board Meeting held during March.

Our next Board meeting is Tuesday, April 14, 2026. Meetings are held monthly. President John Butler leads the two-hour meeting that includes interested Advisors and members. The meetings are held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Southport one week following our gathering at Hatch and begin at 10:00 am. If you wish to attend or have suggestions for the Board, please contact John Butler at jlbutter2007@gmail.com.

Interesting Civil War April Dates

April 12, 1861 - Confederate forces fire upon Fort Sumter, South Carolina.

The Civil War formally begins.

April 9, 1865 - Battle of Appomattox Court House and Surrender, Appomattox Court House, Virginia. After an early morning attempt to break through Federal forces blocking the route west to Danville, VA, Lee seeks an audience with General Grant to discuss terms. That afternoon in the parlor of Wilmer McLean, Lee signs the document of surrender. On April 12, the Army of Northern Virginia formally surrenders and is disbanded.

April 14, 1865 - President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated by actor John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater in Washington, DC. On the same day, Fort Sumter, SC, is re-occupied by US troops.

Pre-Register for the April Meeting

Starting Friday, March 20, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, April 7, current members may log into the system -<https://olr.bcwr-nc.org/> - to print a ticket (one each for yourself and your spouse) showing you've registered.

When you use the online system it will clearly show if you are current (dues paid)...and what to do if you are not up to date. It's that simple!



If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, you will be able to watch it via YouTube Live Streaming by using the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/saihCyo-W2Y?feature=share>

To view at home on your TV: watch on YouTube TV if you have that, or you can "cast" or "mirror" from your phone to your TV. If you are unfamiliar with this, click [here](#) for a link to instructions..

The **BCWRT YouTube Video Library** is where you will find all of the videos that have been created:

<https://www.youtube.com/@brunswickcivilwarroundtabl4954/videos>



The earthwork structures at Fort Fisher. This photograph was taken after its capture.
The Photographic History of the Civil War in Ten Volumes: Volume 5, Forts and Artillery. 1911.



Muster Notes and Notables

The April BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, April 7, 2026.

Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC.

See page 14 for details to attend via YouTube.

Registration begins at 6:15 pm and the meeting starts promptly at 7:00 pm.

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

2025-2026 Officers, Directors, and Advisors

John Butler: President & Director
Ann Birdsall: VP & Director
Jim Dunn: VP & Director
Jennifer Chapman: Secretary & Director
Tom Kehoe: Treasurer & Director
Bruce Jordan: Director
Chuck Roedema: Director
Gar Dowell: Advisor
Charen Fink: Advisor
Chris Fonvielle: Advisor

Jim McKee: Advisor
Chris Mackowski: Advisor
Skip Maxwell: Advisor
Roy Pender: Advisor
Wally Rueckel: Advisor
Wade Sokolosky: Advisor
Robbin Smith: Advisor
Len Trizinski: Advisor
John Wall: Advisor
Angela Zombek: Advisor

Connect with us



We Welcome Your Suggestions for our Speakers, Website, Meeting Procedures, Membership Retention, etc.

The Brunswick Civil War Round Table does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, creed, ancestry, disability or any other legally protected status in its educational programs, activities, or membership.

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

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