



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - MIKE POWELL



BCWRT sends condolences to volunteer Jim Wheeler and family at the loss of Jim's wife, Jerri Ellen Wheeler. The Wheelers retired to St. James in 2016 and since then Jerri was active in Trinity United Methodist church, as well

as various clubs and lunch groups. She will be missed by friends and family.

We hosted our second Zoom meeting on October 6, featuring Jack Davis as our speaker, and had significantly more participants than in September. Seems we're getting Zoom friendly! Jack did a superb job discussing Jeff Davis' escape at the war's end. The

presentation was recorded and can be viewed on our Facebook page, even if you are not a Facebook subscriber: <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/>

Although the meetings in Zoom go well, we still learn something each month. If you have not received the monthly meeting invitation by the Sunday before the meeting, please let someone know so we can get you in on time. Please do not wait until the last day to contact us as meeting day is already very busy. (We send out the meeting invitation, complete with details

for connecting to Zoom, on the Friday, ten days before we meet. We repeat this information in the *Call to Arms* newsletter sent one week before the meeting.) Although the meeting does not start until 7 p.m., we ask you join by 6:45 p.m. and you'll be in the "waiting room." We get a rush right at 7, and we can only admit one member at a time.

Not much is new on the status of HR7608, the bill that passed the House of Representatives requiring the removal of all Confederate references from National Parks. If you have not done so already,

please write a letter to Senators Tillis and Burr opposing this legislation. We need every letter or call or email! If the NPS is endangered, what's next? (See the October newsletter at our website for details

regarding writing/calling/emailing our NC Senators.) As announced, our November meeting, originally set for November 3 (we want everyone to have all that day and evening to get out and vote), is rescheduled for Tuesday, November 10, and features Chris Mackowski, who has proven one of our most popular speakers. So mark your calendar for this one-week-later-than-usual presentation. Until then, stay safe, maintain social distancing, and please wear your mask.

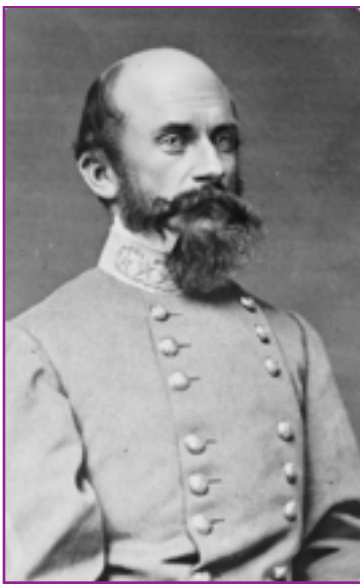
Mike

GETTYSBURG DECISION FEATURED

AT NOVEMBER 10 MEETING

Our November meeting, moved to Tuesday, November 10 so as not to compete with the 2020 elections, will feature a popular and dynamic speaker addressing a much-debated decision at the Battle of Gettysburg. Chris Mackowski's talk is entitled, "Second Guessing Richard Ewell: The First Day at Gettysburg."

As historians continue to analyze the situation on that first day of the battle at Gettysburg, it might be one of the most second-guessed decisions of the war. On July 1, 1863, Confederate Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell decided it was not achievable to



storm the Union position at Gettysburg after a hard day of fighting. As a result, history has scapegoated Ewell for the Confederate loss there. However, critics have loudly wondered, "If Stonewall Jackson had been there..." But Ewell made a

militarily sound decision as a look at the facts will show. Second guessing seems to be a common occurrence when it comes to indecisive issues in this battle for supremacy, and Chris is eager to share his analysis and point-of-view.

Chris Mackowski, Ph.D., is the editor-in-chief and co-founder of Emerging Civil War. He is the editor of the award-winning [Emerging Civil War Series](#), and the "Engaging the Civil

War" series. Chris is a professor at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, NY. He has worked as a historian for the National Park Service at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park. Chris has authored or co-authored a dozen books on the Civil War, his articles have



appeared in all the major Civil War magazines and journals, and he has spoken three times to our round table, garnering an enthusiastic standing applause after each appearance.

There are two ways to join our Zoom meeting. The easiest is to connect directly by clicking on this link (or copying and pasting in your browser):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88699756649?pwd=T0FERGNMMHpYc11DRWJIZW9STGJDQT09>

Or, if you have the Zoom app installed, the meeting ID is: 886 9975 6649; and the passcode is: 483183.

You are encouraged to sign in to the meeting 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!

MYTHBUSTERS

A review of Jack Davis' October Presentation

By Jim Medeiros

Attractive myths surround the end of the Confederacy: Jefferson Davis fled Richmond so frightened that he traveled as a woman. John Breckenridge, Robert E. Lee, and Judah Benjamin plotted to overthrow Davis and surrender to the Union. The soldiers escorting the government's evacuation plundered millions of dollars in gold. Alternatively, Jefferson Davis buried the gold in a secret treasure trove as he fled. The Confederates intentionally fired Richmond. All these *facts* come to mind when we remember war's end. Tall tales fascinate more than the truth Jack Davis brought us the unvarnished word.

The end of Grant's siege of Petersburg ended the Confederate capital of Richmond. By his appointment as the last Secretary of War of the Confederacy in February 1865, Breckinridge found the country had lost most of its great cities in Atlanta, Savannah, New Orleans, Norfolk, Charleston and Mobile, and nearby Wilmington. Many Confederates now sought an armistice but not surrender. With an armistice, the fighting could stop for discussion to end of hostilities. Breckinridge and his ilk wanted the rapid integration of the Confederate nation back into the Union complete with intact state and local governments. Though some advocated that the army persist as guerrillas, Confederate deserters in the hills

often rode as renegades. At times the Confederates fought a two-front war with renegades in the rear and Yankees before them. Rapid reintegration assured some legitimate authorities would maintain civil order.

Jefferson Davis himself refused to concede Richmond or the war's end. His stubborn myopia lead Breckinridge and others to change his mind through a thoroughly legal strategy: they asked General Lee for his

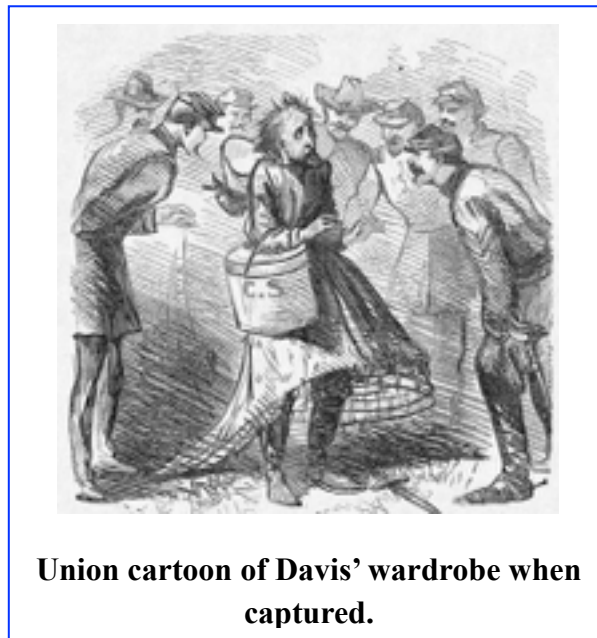
assessment. They knew Lee thought less of victory than of some cessation of fighting, so they requested his formal report on the prosecution of the war, convinced the clear-eyed vision of the greatest general would soften Davis' stubborn stand. Lee's actual report said, "With more resources we can pursue victory longer," an unexpected equivocation. Not a cabal of traitors, the plotters still saw clearly.

Breckinridge's War

Department--unlike most of the government--made careful plans for evacuation.

When Lee called for the abandonment, Davis ordered the destruction of military stores and removal of records. Being prepared, the War Department's boxed records rode the train out of town. Many other departments resorted to piling files in the street and torching them.

(Continued next page)



Union cartoon of Davis' wardrobe when captured.

(Continued from page 3)

The destruction of military stores not only got out of hand but the people of Richmond fell to looting black market warehouses contain clothing and food they never got. Looters far outnumbered the few remaining soldiers and, with the addition of embers from burning records, the fires spread out of control. Left to burn, the city was saved by the occupying Union army .

The peripatetic Confederate government started for many new capitals including Danville, Salisbury, and Greensboro, but remained rootless. The mayor of Salisbury’s greeting presaged their pariah standing, “Welcome to Salisbury. When are you leaving?” With Federal troops all over the

Southeastern U.S., towns feared vengeful retribution for sheltering the rebellious government.

The long march ended in Georgia by which time their escort column of 6,000 troops melted away. The Confederate treasure went with the troops by design and not robbery. Davis divided the gold up among the men – about \$26 each. Although only Breckinridge and Judah managed to escape abroad, President Davis’ attempt to flee the camp failed. He was caught wearing a raglan – a unisex overwrap – his wife had draped over him. The raglan became his wife’s frock in reporting. Thus ended the rebellion in a forlorn hope.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The BCWRT is looking for volunteers to assist members Wally Rueckel and Roy Pender in contacting members regarding membership renewals. “We are trying to reach out personally to our members encouraging them to support the round table in the 2020-21 season. We know the pandemic has changed the manner in which we meet, but the round table still provides some of the best Civil War speakers in the country,” noted Wally. He added that BCWRT is also involved with donating to organizations and causes that support our mission of education and battlefield preservation. Additionally, there are on-going administrative costs.

Volunteers are also needed for preparing pre-meeting slides when we hopefully return to Hatch Auditorium.

To assist with either of these efforts, please contact Wally at wrueckel44@gmail.com or (248) 252-6844.

Prints Available

If you cannot wait until we resume the raffle for one of three framed prints from famed Civil War artists, check out eBay and Craigslist. Thanks to members Skip Maxwell and Jim Conklin, four donated prints are your’s for the bidding: at eBay

click on “Jackson is With You,” and “Lee’s Old War Horse” (make certain you choose BCWRT as the seller). On Craigslist, look for “The Railroad Cut” and “Thompson’s Station.” Any one of these framed prints would make a fine gift “from Santa”!

Ladies' Department

— *By Charen Fink*

Thanksgiving fare was very similar whether one was dining in New England or in South.

Depending upon the wealth of the family, a dinner might include any or all of the following: stuffed turkey, roast suckling pig, hot rolls, oysters on the half shell, celery, radishes, olives, cranberry sauce, fried or mashed potatoes, squash, turnips, onions in cream, giblet gravy, mincemeat pie, bread, fruit, chicken, pumpkin pie, vanilla ice cream, coffee, cakes, and cheese.



Sarah Hale, editor of Godey's Magazine who also wrote poetry including "Mary Had A Little Lamb," lobbied President Lincoln in 1863 to declare a national Thanksgiving holiday on the last Thursday in November. She believed the day would help Americans "put aside sectional feelings and local incidents." Franklin Roosevelt made it a legal holiday in 1939.



Pine Trees and Their Importance

- The wood was used for building, matches, cartridge boxes, ship masts.

- Turpentine was used as a stimulant, diuretic, antiseptic, laxative, and treatment for diabetes, tetanus and tuberculosis.
- Hot turpentine was injected into wounds during the heart of naval battles.
- Rosin was used to waterproof and to make soap.
- The roots produced a garnet-colored dye.

More Trivia Facts

1. When U.S. Grant asked the father of Julia Dent for his permission to wed his daughter, he offered Julia's younger sister Ellen instead! Ulysses and Julia were married anyway on August 22, 1848.
2. Many amputated arms and legs from the Civil War were sent to medical colleges for teaching purposes.
3. Semantically sensitive Victorians termed trousers "inexpressible."
4. In 1996, Alberta Martin became the last "Confederate Widow." She was the third wife of William Jasper Martin. When they married he was 81, and she was 21.



Dues: What to Do?

(Owing to more questions regarding your dues, this article is reprinted from the October newsletter.)

Several members have recently inquired, “What should I do about paying my BCWRT dues?” Here is the answer.

Since we are not meeting at Hatch, you have not been reminded when your dues are up for renewing. Additionally, we have temporarily lost our ability to send you a “friendly reminder” email, also letting you know when your dues are due. Until one or both of these helpful reminder activities are back in place, we are asking you send in your dues check for \$25 to our post office box: BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461. Your payment will be matched to your renewal month.

It may appear there are no expenses since we have not held in-person meetings for all these

months. However, we still provide our Zoom speakers with a fee, there is a cost for our level of Zoom meetings, and we have small administrative expenditures. Also, the leadership team desires sufficient reserves for our annual scholarship, as well as the yearly donations we make to promote, encourage, and support Civil War battlefield preservation.

Of note, our dues have not changed in the ten years since our founding. Hopefully, members still believe there is value in being a member, receiving newsletters filled with informative articles, having access to our Facebook page, and attending ten meetings throughout the year featuring leading historians and scholars.



Fort Caswell History Tours

Fort Caswell is offering history tours of the facility on three Thursdays in November: 5, 12, and 19. The one-hour tour is via a wagon, and you’ll hear of the uses of the property throughout the last century and a half. The wagon will stop for a chance to go inside the fort



and batteries. You’ll enjoy a complimentary apple cider or coffee, and get an exclusive visit to the PX where you can buy mugs, blankets, clothing, and much more. Registration is required. \$10 per

person. Contact: bpace@fortcaswell.com or call 910-278-9501. A health screening and temperature check will be performed, and masks are required while on the grounds.

More on Remembering Ed Bearss and Paul Laird

As noted in last month's newsletter, we are saddened by the loss of two dynamic Civil War historians. Paul Laird gave wise counsel as a BCWRT Advisor and Ed Bearss made us all more knowledgeable thanks to his unique presentations and personal interest in round tables.

To honor Ed, the BCWRT Board of Directors recently approved a donation of \$500 to the Ed Bearss Bentonville Fund which, along with contributions from other North Carolina Civil War round tables, will help purchase additional acreage around the Bentonville Battlefield. There will also be special plaque to honor Ed's many contributions to Civil War history in general, and Bentonville in particular. Ed was fond of visiting Bentonville whenever he was in state.

Paul Laird, a longtime director of the Friends of Fort Fisher, was remembered



with a bang. Paul often commented that upon his death he wished to be cremated, and his ashes fired from one of the fort's period cannons. On Friday, September 25, at his family's request, and with the approval of the State of North Carolina and Fort Fisher, Paul's wish was granted. According to BCWRT member Jim Johnson, a former liaison with the fort who was an invited guest, the memorial service was held behind Shepard's Battery. Paul's family, as well as local and state dignitaries, were in attendance. At the conclusion of the service, the restored 32-pound seacoast cannon was fired in honor of Paul's unique contribution to American, North Carolina and Fort Fisher history. "He definitely approved of the kaboom," noted Jim.



SUGGESTION FOR YOUR EMAIL SYSTEM

Gar Dowell, a BCWRT Vice President, is the person in charge of our membership lists, Zoom calls, and other administrative duties. He has an excellent suggestion. "Please remind members to occasionally search their email junk/spam folders to see if any BCWRT emails were deposited there. Email apps can be rather arbitrary and capricious about deciding which emails go into those folders. We want every member to be able to get the newsletters and meeting notifications, especially now, when we are trying to get the word out on the Zoom monthly meetings."

CIVIL WAR VIEWS



In late August, E. Gifford Stack did a one-day motorcycle ride to Fort Macon in Atlantic Beach, NC. From top left, clockwise: cannon above the covertway; warning sign; looking down the ditch/moat; historic sign at entrance; replica Navy 32-pounder; and cannon atop inner casemates. *(Photos by EGS and a friendly passerby)*

MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The Tuesday, November 10 meeting of the BCWRT will be conducted via Zoom - See page 2.

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	Jack Carpenter: Advisor & Ft. Anderson Liaison
Charen Fink: VP, Director & Ladies' Forum Coord.	Chris Fonvielle: Advisor
Gar Dowell: VP, Director	Tom Kehoe: Advisor
(Vacant): Secretary and Director	Jim McKee: Advisor
Gary Krupp: Treasurer and Director	Roy Pender: Advisor
John Butler: Director	Leslie Rivers: Advisor
Kathy O'Donnell: Director	Wally Rueckel: Advisor
Chuck Roedema: Director	Wade Sokolosky: Advisor
E. Gifford Stack: Director	Peter Whalen: Advisor
Max Williams: Advisor Emeritus	

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