



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table

The President's Corner by John Butler



Remember, if you cannot come to the regularly scheduled meeting, we do a live stream of the meeting starting at 6:45 pm. You can find the link to the live stream on the meeting announcements and in the monthly *Call to Arms* newsletter. If for any reason you cannot find the link, we will post it on the day of the meeting on our website.

Two weeks after the meeting, the meeting will be posted on YouTube. You can find the link to YouTube on our website. We have all our meetings since COVID recorded and available for your review.

If you want a fun day at Fort Fisher plan on attending the Blue and Gray Education Society's symposium, "*The Wilmington Campaign: Last Rays of Departing Hope*", on February 12th. It starts at 9:30 am and costs \$25 payable at the door. No reservations are required. The five speakers include: Dr. Fonvielle, Andrew Duppstadt, Jim McKee, Becky Sawer and Wade Sokolosky. You will hear all about the history of Wilmington's role in the Civil War. There will also be time to see the Fort Fisher Museum and tour the fort. Lunch is on your own. See page 9 for further information.

Celebration of Life for Wally Rueckel is on February 20th from 4:00 to 8:00 pm. It will be at the Town of St. James Homer E. Wright Event Center (formerly the St. James Community Center), 4136 Southport-Supply Rd SE, St. James, NC. Drop in at any time and pay your respects.

Don't forget we have moved our March meeting to **Tuesday, March 17, 2026**. Still at Hatch Auditorium.

John

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BCWRT Upcoming Event

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

“The Atlanta Campaign: *Missed Opportunities*”



Gen. William T. Sherman

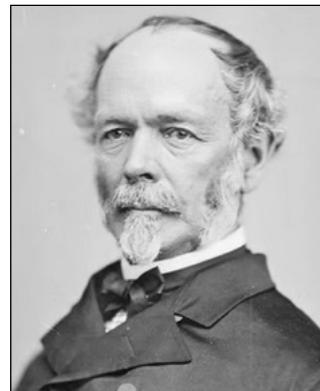
The grueling campaign began on May 1, 1864. Atlanta was the linchpin of the South's hopes and the North's determination, and the city became the epicenter of a battle that would change the course of history forever.

“I've got Joe Johnston dead!” Union Gen. William T. Sherman exclaimed upon hearing that fellow Gen. James B. McPherson won the Battle of Resaca on May 13 – 15 over Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and his Army of Tennessee.

Gen. William T. Sherman

Famously, that turned out not to be true, one of the great “lost opportunities” of the entire war. But in fact, there were other such turning points in the first month of the campaign, each perhaps more significant than Resaca. By the summer of 1864, the struggle reached its peak. It was also the time when the nation's destiny hung in the balance, and pivotal to the reelection of Abraham Lincoln.

Contrary to popular belief Sherman did not set out to capture Atlanta. His orders were to move against Johnston's army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country, inflicting maximum damage against their war resources which were vital to the Confederate war effort. Over time, Johnston retreated, and Southern fears for the city grew. As Sherman advanced, Northern expectations increased. Despite these early encounters, the Atlanta Campaign was far from over.



Gen. Joseph Johnston

By Chuck Roedema



Volumes have been written about the Atlanta Campaign. But none more than historian **David A. Powell**. He is a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute. He is an award-winning author, has published numerous articles in various magazines, and more than fifteen historical simulations of different battles. David's current project is a five volume study of the Atlanta Campaign, which promises to be this generation's definitive treatment of one of the most important and fascinating confrontations of the entire Civil War. Furthermore, his endeavors are a clear indication of the knowledge he has amassed to captivate and entertain his audiences.

See page 8 for Pre-Registering for the Meeting and the link to watch on YouTube.

December Meeting Review

The Battle for Gold Captivated the Audience

by Chuck Roedema

A critical phase of the Civil War took place between 1862 and 1865 according to returning guest speaker Neil Chatelain at our January 6th meeting. In essence, it was an ongoing battle, not on the battlefield, but primarily on the high seas. The reason was over the battle for gold, a commodity without which neither the North nor the South could sustain itself throughout the course of the Civil War.

As Chatelain pointed out, this North-South confrontation was not about high visibility battles such as the Battle of Gettysburg or the Battle of Bull Run; i.e., crucial events leading to victories throughout the war years. These were naval campaigns on the high seas. Attaining gold was the objective.

The focus was the desert Southwest regions, especially California. The U.S. government's goal was mineral extraction, shipping down the west coast, across Panama by rail, and then sailing up through the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean to New York.



The Confederate government was determined to overtake the U.S. "gold ships" via privateers and commerce raiders, while the U.S. military's goal was protection using a vessel protection convoy system and West Coast port security.

The CSS Benjamin Hoxie, the Ocean Queen Mutiny, the CSS Stonewall, along with the involvement of the country's indigenous people and even Confederate soldier Mark Twain, are just a few of the names seldom mentioned when one talks about the American Civil War. With these and other stories Chatelain held his audience captivated and entertained throughout his dramatic presentation.

The Ladies' Forum and Women in the Civil War

The Ladies' Forum

October 19, 2026



Save the date for an evening with Kate Stuart

Sue Crippen will portray Kate Stuart who was a formidable presence in Southport during the Civil War and in the decades that followed. She is considered the matriarch of Southport and was referred to as the Grand Old Lady of North Carolina.

Sue Crippen is an experienced performer and a member of the Southport Historical Society as well as a member of their Living Voices group.



Julia Bulette (1832 - 1867)

Julia entered Virginia City in 1859 becoming the proprietor of Nevada's most popular new pleasure palace at \$1000 a night. As flamboyant as she was, she did make some honorable contributions. She nursed ailing miners, dispensed soup and did some fund-raising for the Union. The firefighters in Virginia City picked her as "Queen of Sporting Row" for the annual Independence Day parade in 1867. She died at 35 at the hands of a jewel thief. Of course the grateful and pious women of the city plied the thief with fried chicken and homemade pies and even pleaded for his pardon. They thought, even in death she was up to no good.

From The Civil War Ladies's Department by Charen Bishop Fink



Not everyone who knew her shunned her. There is a group today in Virginia City, NV who keep her memory alive.

Learn more about Julia and "the rush to Washoe," Nevada when the largest silver lode of silver in North America, the Comstock Lode, was discovered in 1859 by visiting juliacbulette.com, the home of "Julia C. Bulette Chapter 1864".

Hoecakes Recipe

These tender and crispy cornbread hoecakes are a classic Southern treat that pairs perfectly with butter, honey, or as a side dish. They're easy to make and sure to become a family favorite.



Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup buttermilk
2 Tablespoons butter, melted
Honey or butter for serving (optional)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 F
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, salt, and baking soda.
3. Add buttermilk and melted butter; stir until just combined.
4. Drop tablespoonfuls of the mixture onto a greased baking sheet.
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown and crispy.
6. Serve warm with honey or butter, if desired.

<https://foodcookingrecipe.com/civil-war-recipes>, shared by Robbin Smith

The Name “Hoe Cake”: Origins and Significance

The name “hoe cake” likely refers to the fact that the corn used to make these cakes was harvested using a hoe. Another theory is that the name comes from the practice of cooking these cakes on a hoe or a flat piece of metal which in the past would be used as a makeshift griddle. This practice was common among enslaved Africans and Native Americans who did not have access to traditional cooking equipment.

Hoe cakes have significant cultural and historical importance, particularly in the context of American slavery and the Civil War. Hoe cakes were a staple food among enslaved Africans, who relied on these cakes as a source of sustenance and comfort. The simplicity and versatility of hoe cakes made them an ideal food for people who had limited access to resources and cooking equipment.

Hoe cakes also played a significant role in the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses used by enslaved Africans to escape to freedom. Hoe cakes were often used as a form of sustenance and currency among escaping slaves, who would trade these cakes for food, shelter, and other forms of assistance.

<https://tableandspoon.com/why-do-they-call-it-a-hoe-cake/>

BCWRT Fundraiser

Civil War Art for Sale

As a result of generous donations by two members, BCWRT is able to offer two beautiful prints for sale.

The first print (unframed but matted) is a **Mort Kunstler work**, "***The Fairfax Raid***," depicting Mosby's raid on Fairfax Court House and subsequent capture of BG Edwin Stoughton.

This print is dated and autographed by Kunstler. It is #0926 of 2,750 limited editions and comes with the Certificate of Authenticity.

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



The second print is a portrait of Stonewall Jackson in field uniform.

This print measures 10 1/2" x 14".
The overall size including the frame is 21" x 24".

BCWRT's asking price for the Mort Kunstler print is \$125 (OBO). This is almost 25% less than the asking price on the Kunstler website, as well as others.

For the Jackson print, BCWRT pricing is \$40 (OBO).

Both prints will be on display at upcoming BCWRT meetings.

Meeting Photo Gallery

Photos From January 2026 Meeting



“Treasure and Empire in the Civil War”



Neil Chatelain

I learned sooooo much that was never a part of our history classes. Did not know AZ seceded. Had no idea there were so many Confederates in promotions out west. Had no idea about the ships taking gold and silver through the Panama canal.

Thought he was a terrific speaker as he kept things informative but light. Bravo! Again so grateful have these offered through my computer.

*Kendra Maxwell
in AZ*



Photos by Chuck Roedema

FREE BOOK GIVEAWAY

The storage area at Hatch for our Sutler's Table will be greatly reduced in size in the next couple of months while some remodeling is being done.

We have decided to reduce our inventory of books by giving them away at the February and March meetings.

Come on up to the Sutler's Tables and choose whatever you like from all the books on display. Enjoy your read!

Society for Women and the Civil War

"SWCW is an organization dedicated to recognizing the efforts of women who lived through or participated in the American Civil War and those who research, reenact, or otherwise honor these women of the past."

The BCWRT is now an organizational partner with the Society for Women and Civil War. Visit their website by clicking [here](#).

Enjoy their informative newsletter, The Calling Card, by clicking on the picture.



Our March 3 Meeting

has been
Rescheduled

Due to lack of availability of Hatch Auditorium in the beginning of March, 2026, it was necessary to change the date from March 3 to **Tuesday, March 17, 2026**.

Our program will remain as originally planned, with a very interesting topic by **Dean Calbreath**:

"The Sergeant: The Incredible Life of Nicholas Said: From Central Africa Through Czarist Russia to the Frontlines of the Civil War"

Pre-Register for the February Meeting

Starting Friday, January 16, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, February 3, current members may log into the system <https://olr.bcwrt-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!

YouTube™ Live

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/eAzoAGWGCYQ?feature=share>

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

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

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

BCWRT Tours & BGES Seminar

Save the Dates

Fort Fisher March 14, 2026



Dr. Chris Fonvielle will lead an exclusive tour of Fort Fisher, offering an in-depth look at the pivotal Civil War battle of January 15, 1865.

Starting time: 3:00 pm \$30 per person

This tour will be limited to 40 people.

A table for sign up and tickets will be set up in the entrance foyer after the February meeting.

Fort Caswell

April 7, 2026

with Jim McKee

We will have two tours:

4:00 - 5:15 pm

5:30 - 6:45 pm

More details to follow.



The Wilmington Campaign: “Last Rays of Departing Hope”

Blue & Gray Education Society

One-Day Seminar

February 12, 2026

Fort Fisher State Historic Site

Visitor Center

9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Cost: \$25

Guest Speakers

Dr. Chris Fonvielle Jr.

Andrew Duppstadt

Jim McKee

Becky Sawyer

Wade Sokolosky

For more information contact Wade Sokolosky: bgesExDir@gmail.com (434) 770-7325

All proceeds go to Battlefield Interpretation

Notes from the January 13 Board of Directors Meeting

1. Our January meeting with Neil Chatelain had a good turnout - 375 live attendance and 73 via YouTube - and was well received by the members.
2. The speaker for the October 2026 Ladies' Forum, Sue Crippen, has been scheduled. She will portray Kate Stuart of Southport.
3. The Fort Fisher tour has been scheduled for March 13, 2026 with Chris Fonvielle. There will be two tours of Fort Caswell on April 7, weather permitting, otherwise on May 5.
4. We will have a free book giveaway at the February and March meetings due to reduced storage area at Hatch during that time.
5. There will not be a Board meeting in March because of the rescheduling of the regular meeting.
6. Flowers will be purchased for Wally Rueckel's Celebration of Life, February 20, at the St. James Center.
7. It was decided that we will have a plaque created to honor and in memory of Wally Rueckel and Tom O'Donnell together, the founders of BCWRT.

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 jlbutler2007@gmail.com.

A Civil War Valentine

"My Very Dear Wife" -

The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Ballou

Of the tens of thousands of letters written in the days leading up to the First Battle of Manassas, certainly none is more famous than the last letter of Major Sullivan Ballou. Very few, however, had the foresight or the eloquence to leave behind a legacy as touching as Sullivan Ballou's to his grief-stricken family, as in this excerpt...

But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth, and fit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you in the garish day, and the darkest night amidst your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours always, always, and, if the soft breeze fans your cheek, it shall be my breath; or the cool air cools your throbbing temples, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dear; think I am gone, and wait for me, for we shall meet again.

Read about Major Sullivan Ballou on the National Park Service site by clicking [here](#). Watch a clip from "The Civil War" series by Ken Burns where actor Paul Roebling reads the full letter. Click [here](#).

Wilmington Historical Sites

Latimer House

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

Burgwin-Wright House

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

Bellamy Mansion

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

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

Local Events

Southport Historical Society Programs

“The Life and Times of Robert Ruark”

Presented by Rick Pukenas
Proprietor of the Robert Ruark Inn

Tuesday, February 10, 10:00 am, Harper Library

Rick will discuss Southport's most well-known author whose book, *The Old Man and The Boy*, described his life growing up in Southport during the 1920s.

Free. Reservations Required: 910-457-6237

“Professor Frank Gordon: 55 Years of Teaching”

Friday, February 6, 2026
Southport Community Building
223 E. Bay Street, Southport.

Written by Southport Historical Society President **Liz Fuller, Ph.D.**, this opening-night performance of the 3-day Brunswick County Black History Symposium tells the story of **Frank Gordon**, who was born enslaved and went on to educate generations of Brunswick County children during a 55-year teaching career.

Admission is free, but reservations are required. Doors open at 5:30 pm. Tickets may be reserved at www.southporthistoricalsociety.org.

Living Voices: Lunch With History

Wednesday, February 18, 2026
11:30 am and 2:30 pm

This unique lunchtime program invites guests to enjoy a light meal while meeting historic interpreters portraying real Southport residents from years past, bringing local history to life through conversation and storytelling.

The program is **free for Southport Historical Society members** and **\$10 for non-members**. Tickets may be reserved at www.southporthistoricalsociety.org.

Information, email info@southporthistoricalsociety.org.

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

“Remembering Bentonville: From Home to Battlefield”

Presented by Colby Lipscomb

As the smoke cleared following the largest battle fought on North Carolina soil in the Civil War, residents of the small village of Bentonville, NC had to move on with their lives while living through unprecedented change and having witnessed first-hand the horrors of battle.

In the 160 years since, people built this hallowed ground into a commemorative landscape to honor the soldiers who fell here while still living and working in this community turned battlefield.

Colby Lipscomb has written: “People make the Bentonville story – the families who picked up the pieces of the ravaged landscape, the veterans who first made pilgrimages, the historians who desired to preserve the sites of tragedy and bravery, the descendants connecting to their ancestors, the visitors hoping to learn something new, and the dedicated staff and volunteers who labored to make those experiences possible.” Hear some of those stories in this presentation.

Colby Lipscomb currently serves as registrar for North Carolina Historic Sites. He served as the Education Coordinator and later Programs Coordinator at Bentonville. He holds a Masters in Public History from NC State University. In 2024, Colby and Derrick Brown of the Bentonville Historic Site, co-authored *Images of America: Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site*.

Thursday, February 12, 7:00 pm

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



Muster Notes and Notables

**The February BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, February 3, 2026.
Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC.
See page 8 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 Trzinski: 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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