



# Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As explained in last month's newsletter, the Board has agreed to rotate the presidency among Board members until at least the end of May. This month's Acting President is VP Cindy Brochure.

Cindy is a native North Carolinian, born and raised in Cumberland County. Her interest in the Civil War is family related. Her great-great grandfather was stationed at the Fayetteville Armory and is buried in the family plot. Cindy's father instilled a desire in her to study the Civil War and all U.S. history.

Prior to moving to Brunswick County in 2007, Cindy was vice president and tourism director for Kinston and Lenoir County. She obviously is a strong supporter of the preservation efforts for the Battle of Kinston and Battle of Wyse Fork sites, as well as the CSS Neuse Museum and CSS Neuse II replica. She is intimately familiar with that area's historically significant sites, including homes used as hospitals, pristine earthworks, and burial grounds. "Having lived in Kinston for over 35 years, I know the stories behind each of these fascinating localities," she noted.

Asked about other favorite Civil War locations, she mentioned Richmond as a

locale that gives her meaningful, historical insights. Among her most-liked sites are the Confederate White House, Hollywood Cemetery and Pamplin Historical Park. She also supports Civil War Trails and multiple Civil War battlefield preservation efforts.



Cindy's name may be familiar to many of us as she was the director of economic development and tourism in Southport before becoming Mayor of Oak Island from 2016-2020. She joined the BCWRT back in 2011 and fondly remembers many speakers, but especially Ed Bearss. This is her first experience on BCWRT's leadership team. She is the owner/operator of Oak Island Surveyors, Inc. In her spare time she enjoys genealogy and is her family's ardent researcher.

The photo of Cindy was taken in the pristine earthworks at the Battle of Wyse Fork. "The first day of that battle was won by the South, and Union soldiers were held prisoner behind these earthworks. Many relics have been uncovered and I played a part in preserving and protecting them. They all hold a special meaning to me. When standing there, I can hear the soldiers and the surrounding battle."

# ONE BATTLE.

## TWO GENERALS. TWO LIFE STORIES!

Our Tuesday, February 2 meeting examines the lives and experiences of Union General Franz Sigel and Confederate General John C. Breckinridge. The presentation focuses on how their leadership styles and decisions changed history on a rainy afternoon, May 15, 1864, near the crossroads town of New Market, Virginia. The guest presenter is Sarah Kay Bierle, an author, speaker and researcher whose career is dedicated to major events and turning points in the American Civil War.

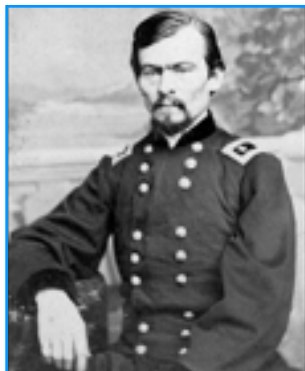
The Battle of New Market was fought during the Valley Campaign of 1864. A makeshift Confederate army of 4,100 men led by



Confederate General Breckinridge, which included 275 cadets from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), defeated Union General Franz Sigel and his Army of the Shenandoah with nearly twice as many troops. On the winning side, Breckinridge was a politician who served as the fourteenth vice-president

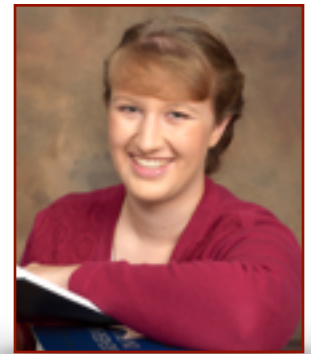
of the United States in 1856, and later mounted an unsuccessful presidential bid in 1860. He joined the Confederacy at the start of the Civil War, serving in various commands and ending as the final Confederate secretary of war in 1865.

On the losing side, the German-born Sigel failed to provide a campaign victory General Grant wanted in the Shenandoah Valley. Sigel was a fantastic organizer, loyal to his friends, valued



education, understood the value of image and influence, and loved the ideals of freedom and liberty. Yet he struggled with leadership which hampered his military career, including his retreat from New Market and a hasty replacement by Major General Hunter.

Sarah is the managing editor of Emerging Civil War which serves as a public history-oriented platform for sharing original scholarship related to the American Civil War. She is also assistant to the director at the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust in Fredericksburg, Virginia.



She has spoken to numerous round tables, national museum programs, historical societies, conference, and symposiums.

There are two ways to join the 7 p.m. meeting. The easiest is to connect directly to this link which contains the meeting ID and Passcode: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85037048446?pwd=M2t3eVhKT29ndks1Q2Y4Znl5MTZYdz09>

Or, if you have the Zoom app installed, the meeting ID is: 850 3704 8446 and the passcode is: 825963. Please keep this link in a handy spot, and kindly do not send emails to the round table asking for the information again. Once you join the meeting, you will be placed in a 'waiting room.'

You are encouraged to sign in early. Starting about 6:50 p.m., we will begin admitting people from the waiting room to the meeting. It takes several minutes to admit all attendees. Signing in early also reduces potential frustration wrestling with those untimely and annoying computer issues!

# Writing about North Carolina in the Civil War

A review of Philip Gerard's January Presentation By Jim Medeiros

Mr. Gerard when originally asked to write a monthly column for the Civil War's anniversary for *Our State* magazine tried to gently recuse himself, suggesting other authors with stronger historical backgrounds. The *Our State* editor basically met the objections with the answer that she wanted someone "really ignorant about the Civil War." Lest you think this damned with faint phrase, consider that the writer



with no deep experience on a topic also has no deep-rooted predilections or old axes to grind. Then, too, if you write for a general public in a non-specialist magazine, the writer of lesser subject matter expertise should speak to the audience's general

needs better than the scholar. What Gerard did bring to the table, a solid history of writing fiction and journalism, armed him with the tools to do the job and maybe even us.

He decided certain things underlay most of his writing and apply specially to studying the Civil War:

- Everything he would write had to focus on North Carolina. The series would ultimately result in a book and, the tome, too, would be about ordinary people and NOT the politicians and generals of history.
- He would use the present tense throughout to give a sense of immediacy mimicking current events.
- To go with that, he wanted to use actual records to focus the work and use with his

personal visits to battlefields to handle the artifacts of history.

- Focusing on individuals would help the broader story and personalize the work.

The principles of personalizing, a laser focus with the texture of reality stand any writer in good stead and carry over in the best writing. Civil War history does not have a monopoly on good communication.

In addition, NC afforded a microcosm of the war. Blockades and blockade runners surrounded Wilmington; a freedman's town on Roanoke Island not only sheltered contrabands but also recruited for the USCT; Fort Fisher offered a huge earthen fort that fell to an amphibious invasion; a POW camp in Salisbury boasted all the evils found in camps north and south; native Americans from Cherokee fought in their own battalion for the Confederacy; North Carolinians both opposed and supported secession while participating in every major battle of the war, offering both deserters and devotees.

Perhaps one of the greatest charms of Mr. Gerard's Civil War writing came from the fact that his personalizing touches arose not from musty archives found in university libraries. Rather, his blessing derived directly from being a non-Civil War scholar. When he published his first column in the magazine it provoked a tide of calls from readers offering the journals and letters written by NC ancestors, records that resided in family shoeboxes and scrapbooks. These virgin history sources brought joy to both the monthly column and the book it ultimately birthed.

Over 60,000 books have been written on the American Civil War. Although Mr. Gerard spoke eloquently about his findings, his greatest gift to us emerged from a blueprint, "How to write a decent book." Maybe you would like to try your hand to be number 60,001?

# Ladies' Department — *By Charen Fink*

February is Black History Month, and I'd like to incorporate some historical trivia in addition to recognizing our Black heritage.

**History of Vaccination:** As we are still in the midst of the world's largest pandemic, our patience is being tried waiting to be called to receive a vaccination, preventing even more deaths. Vaccines were discovered in the Eighteenth Century by Edward Jenner to prevent smallpox. At the time, there was no effective cure and millions died every year, and the survivors were left with disfiguring scars. It was a terribly successful killer. Sound familiar sans the scars? At the time the vaccination was hazardous because it involved infecting a mild form of the disease to heighten immunity.

Jenner observed that milkmaids suffering from cowpox seemed immune to smallpox. To find out if this might save lives, he took the pus from the lesions of a cowpox patient and

transferred it to his gardener's eight-year-old son. The boy fell ill but fully recovered. He then took a mild dose



of smallpox and infected the same boy to test his vaccination. No smallpox developed. Vaccination is named after *vacca*, the Latin for cow. After 1803 smallpox was conquerable. By 1980, the World Health Organization announced its total eradication.

## **Civil War Era Girls' Names Still in Style:**

Amelia, Catherine, Jane, Abigail, Caroline, Louise, Anna, Emily, Laura, Mary, Christine, Lydia, Grace, Alice, Evelyn and Sara.

## **Southern Black Women During the Civil War:**

Southern Black women operating as spies, scouts, couriers and guides were willing and able to offer enormous support to Union military personnel and operations. They had a deep devotion to end the war and be emancipated. Southern prejudices relied on ignoring the intelligence of Black women, therefore they were able to provide invaluable covert assistance to the Union military.

Some of the more notable of these women, which have been profiled in previous articles, were Harriet Tubman (Moses of her people), Mary Elizabeth Bowser (pictured) who worked for Elizabeth Van Lew, and Mary Touvestre, who while working for a Confederate engineer in Norfolk, overheard plans for building the C.S.S. Virginia.



**Black Nurses During the Civil War:** Susie King Taylor (pictured) and Ann Stokes were former slaves who gained their freedom as the Union took over Confederate strongholds in the South. Once under the protection of the Union army, these women took an active role in the fight for freedom by

becoming nurses to wounded soldiers. African-American nurses were often confined to menial labor jobs, ordered to work among the most dangerously ill patients, or assigned to care for African-American soldiers.



# NEW OFFICERS AND ADVISORS

At our January meeting, members unanimously voted in new officers for 2021. As mentioned, despite the aggressive efforts of the Nominating Committee, there is no President due to the absence of someone wanting to hold the office at present. Volunteers from the Board will each take a month serving as Acting President until June, the end of our program year and when we pause our meetings until September.

Elected to fill our two Vice President positions are Gar Dowell and Cindy Brochure. Gar served as our Acting President for January and was featured on page one of the January newsletter. Cindy's background is on the first page of this issue.

Gary Krupp remains Treasurer. You may recall Gary in a previous edition of *Call to Arms* mentioned growing up in southeastern Pennsylvania, visiting Gettysburg and Antietam National Battlefields frequently.

New to the leadership team is Jim Kane (pictured), our Secretary. Jim grew up in Brooklyn, near the Narrows that forms the entrance to New York harbor. His father introduced him to history at an early age, letting him climb on Civil War cannons outside old Fort Hamilton. There was also a neighborhood church where past

congregates included Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. Jim practiced law and was an inner city school teacher before moving to Brunswick County.



At their January meeting, Board members voted former President Mike Powell as an Advisor, wisely continuing to take advantage of Mike's vast Civil War knowledge and his numerous contacts who one day could be potential speakers. The Board also elected Ann Birdsall as an Advisor. She was born and raised in Raleigh and served in the US Air Force, learning much about the history of the overseas counties where she was stationed. Following her USAF career, Ann worked for several governmental agencies, as well as the private sector. She notes, "Since retiring to Oak Island five years ago, I have been touring U.S. battlefields, attending seminars and joined the BCWRT to continue learning about U.S. history."

The complete list of Directors and Advisors is always provided on the last page of *Call to Arms*.

**OTHER BOARD NEWS** - At their January 13 meeting, the BOD spent considerable time discussing why some members have difficulty receiving BCWRT meeting notices and the newsletter. It was noted that in nearly all instances the member's spam or all-mail was grabbing the emails before they could get to the inbox. Please put BCWRT and [egstack44@gmail.com](mailto:egstack44@gmail.com) in your contact list, thereby allowing you to receive our electronic mail. The Board also encouraged all members to try and send in their dues around the time they think it is due to the PO Box listed on the last page of this newsletter. The Board believes these issues will be reduced once we again meet in person.

# BCWRT Thanked for Assisting in Park's Creation

Last year the BCWRT donated \$2,000 to assist in the creation of a Civil War park dedicated to the role Sugar Loaf lines played in the defense of Ft Fisher and Wilmington. Paul Laird, a BCWRT Advisor who passed away suddenly last September, was a major player in helping the park become a reality.

Recently, the Federal Point Historic Preservation Society, the overall coordinator of the park's development, sent a letter to Mike Powell, our immediate past President. The correspondence thanked BCWRT, "...again for your generous donation of

\$2,000 for funding two interpretive markers at the site of the Battle of Sugar Loaf in Carolina Beach, NC."

The society plans a dedication ceremony on February 11, 2021, at 2 p.m., the anniversary of the battle. The park is five miles north of Ft. Fisher.

Fortunately, the historical society's excellent website gives a detailed account of the park and how it came to be...<http://federal-point-history.org>.

There are five markers at the park, each discussing some aspect of the fortification, the battle for the site, and its ultimate abandonment by Confederate troops. Of note, the February 11 Union attack was spearheaded by U.S. Colored Troops. "Despite their courage and prowess in the headlong frontal assault against

the strongly entrenched Confederate forces, the African American soldiers and their white comrades failed to overrun the defenses." Due to the determination and fighting skills of the Confederates at Sugar Hill, Union forces

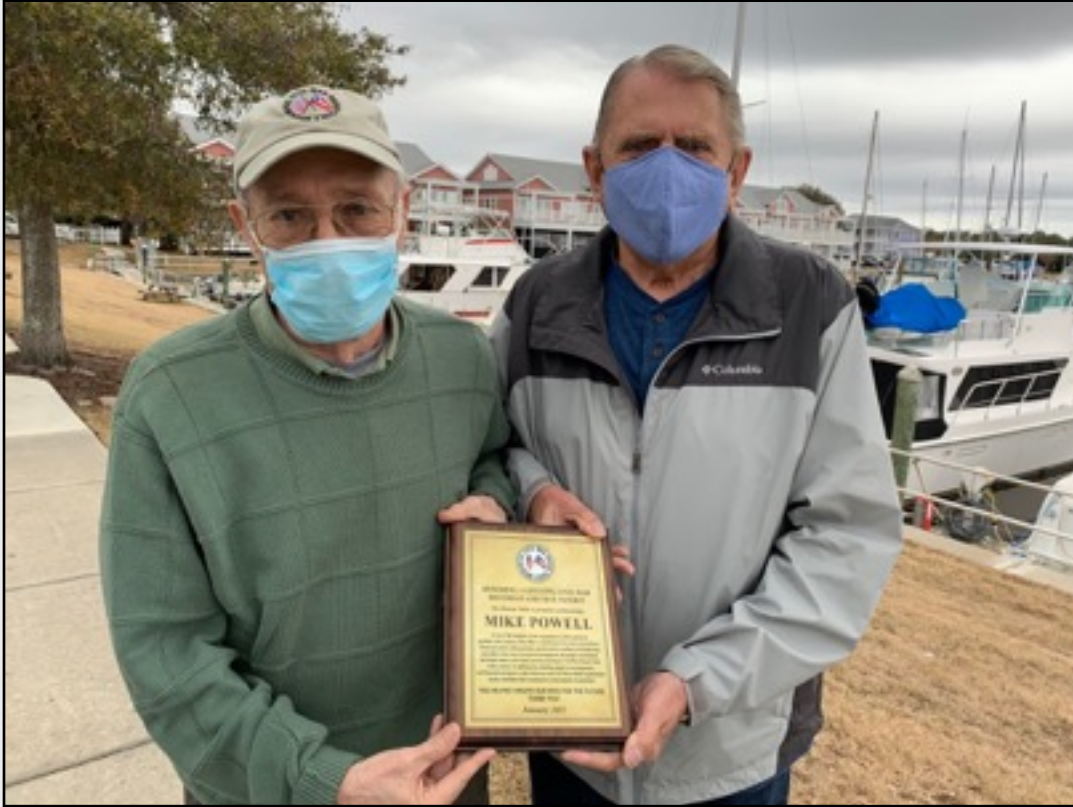


Section of Sugar Loaf defensive entrenchments preserved in the new Sugar Loaf park, in Carolina Beach.

transferred their operations and drive to take Wilmington to the west side of the Cape Fear River.

According to the society's website, "The new ten-acre 'passive' park will provide a quiet 'off the beaten path' area for locals and visitors to get away from the hustle and bustle of the beach and spend a little time in the native natural setting of our original local Eco-system."

# POWELL RECOGNIZED



**A**t our January meeting, Mike Powell was virtually presented a plaque honoring his five years serving as BCWRT’s president. Chuck Roedema, a Board member who also is our publicist, spoke on behalf of every person in our organization when he told Mike that time and again he was always there, helping our round table. “Whether it was your leadership, volunteering, recommending, guiding, or just going well beyond the call of duty, you’ve always been there.”

Mike was cited for his assistance given to other round tables across the country, his support to keep Civil War monuments and statues in place in our National Parks, guiding our move from a church hall to Fort Caswell and computerizing the registration, and most recently, continuing to meet via Zoom.

Chuck then read the plaque’s inscription: “Honoring a lifelong Civil War Historian and True Patriot. The Round Table is Proud to Acknowledge Mike Powell. As one of the founders of our organization in 2010 and as its president since January 2016, Mike’s contributions have been extraordinary. Always pro-active, always positive and devoted to excellence, his leadership, especially in the areas of program development and speaker recruitment, has helped make us the fastest growing and largest Civil War Round Table in the country. In addition, his unending support, encouragement, and financial assistance to other historical and Civil War-related organizations clearly established this organization as the pinnacle of patriotism. You Helped Create Our Path for the Future. Thank You! January 2021.”

Chuck is shown above — on the right and in real time! — presenting Mike with the BCWRT plaque of appreciation, following a lunch in his honor.

# CIVIL WAR VIEWS



Member Ken Keast, who coordinated our lobby registration at Hatch, moved to Charlottesville, Virginia in 2019 for a change in weather and scenery. Last year he took several day trips to visit Civil War sites. Clock-wise from top left: some of the 2,200 Confederate gravesites in the Old City Cemetery in Lynchburg; the cemetery's obelisk listing the 14 states of the fallen; Culpeper National Cemetery where thousands of Union soldiers are interred, along with supposedly one Confederate veteran!; and Montpelier where throughout the winter of 1863-64, as many as 4,500 Confederate troops camped following their defeat at Gettysburg.

*All photos by Ken Keast*



# **MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES**

**The Tuesday, February 2 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](http://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. Contact us at [brunswickcwr@gmail.com](mailto:brunswickcwr@gmail.com)

Mail Dues Checks to: BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461

## **2021 Officers, Directors, and Advisors**

(Vacant): President & Director  
Cindy Brochure: VP & Director  
Gar Dowell: VP & Director  
Jim Kane: Secretary & Director  
Gary Krupp: Treasurer & Director  
John Butler: Director  
Kathy O'Donnell: Director  
Chuck Roedema: Director  
E. Gifford Stack: Director  
Ann Birdsall: Advisor

Peter Carmichael: Advisor  
Chris Fonvielle: Advisor  
Tom Kehoe: Advisor  
Jim McKee: Advisor  
Roy Pender: Advisor  
Mike Powell: Advisor  
Leslie Rivers: Advisor  
Wally Rueckel: Advisor  
Wade Sokolosky: Advisor  
Peter Whelan: Advisor

Max Williams: Advisor Emeritus

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