



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



If you have an interest in technology and websites, we can use your help. It is time for the BCWRT to give our website a revamp, as it is showing its almost ten year old age. We

are looking at the entire gamut: content, look and feel, user friendliness, as well as the operating technology. If you are able to help, please let me know.

I have come across an interesting organization that offers virtual seminars of some very well know speakers such Eric Wittenberg, Gary Ecelbarger, Kevin Pawlak, Scott Patchan, Scott Hartwig, Scott Mingus, Jeffry Wert, and Wade Sokolosky (our speaker this month), to name a few. It is the **Chambersburg Civil War Seminars and Tours**, website: <https://www.civilwarseminars.org>. Their bi-monthly history talks are virtual and cost \$5. They also offer one day lecture series, tours (upcoming are Chancellorsville and Brandy Station), and conferences.

Here are two local upcoming Civil War commemorative events you might find interesting.



Saturday, February 19, 2022, from 9:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. the Cameron Art Museum will remember the 157th anniversary of the Battle of Forks Road. They will have US Colored Troops re-enactors, professional storytellers, and a panel discussion featuring the "Boundless" sculpture artist

Stephen Hayes. While you are there, be certain to view Stephen's stunning artwork honoring the USCT who fought at the Battle of Forks Road (sculpture photo by Dick Slease). Cameron Art Museum is located at 3201 S. 17th St, Wilmington, NC. For more details go their website: <https://cameronartmuseum.org/> or their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CameronArtMuseum/>

I know this is a ways out, however, on **March 19**, **Bentonville Battlefield** will commemorate the 157th anniversary of the largest battle ever fought in North Carolina. The program is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Bentonville Battlefield is located at 5466 Harper House Road, Four Oaks, NC, in Johnston County. If you have never visited the battlefield this might be a good time to do so. Get more details on their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/BentonvilleSHS/> or website: <https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/bentonville-battlefield>. (Continued on page 6)

SHERMAN'S MARCH INTO NORTH CAROLINA

If you live along the coast of North Carolina you will want to hear our February speaker tell what happened some 157 years ago as General Sherman marched his troops towards Richmond. We're fortunate to feature renowned historian and returning guest speaker Wade Sokolosky discuss



“Welcoming Gen. Sherman: 1865 Logistics Operations on the North Carolina Coast” at our Tuesday, February 1 meeting.

How did the Union prepare to quickly expand from 12,000

men to almost 100,000 soldiers? What preparations took place at the port cities of Wilmington, Morehead City, and New Bern? How did he get the food, medical supplies, armaments, and other necessities of war into the state? What role did the railroads play? Were local citizens offering help or resistance in preparing for Sherman's troops?

Wade will provide the answers with his easy to understand knowledgeable delivery...and enthusiasm! He is one of North Carolina's experts in the 1865 Carolinas Campaign. Aside from being a prolific author and co-author of several Civil War books, an award-winning historian, and a tour guide with the Friends of Bentonville Battlefield, he also is a longtime Advisor to our round table.



You are encouraged to attend the meeting either via Zoom or in person. If participating via Zoom, simply use the following:

Link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89786768288?pwd=SIJ1Mi80TCswUmEvdWE4c1Ezdmp2dz09> **Meeting ID** - 897 8676 8288 **Passcode** - 082123

If attending in person, we encourage you to pre-register. If you used this convenient process for any of our first five meetings this program year, you must pre-register again as a meeting ticket is only good that (one) month. Starting Friday, January 21, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, February 1, 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. Bring the ticket(s) to Hatch and enter through the special door on the far right. (Please do not go to the registration tables.) 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!

The Tuesday, February 1 meeting takes place at Hatch Auditorium on the grounds of Fort Caswell. Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. and the program starts promptly at 7 p.m. The guest admission fee is \$10, and can be applied toward the \$25 annual membership dues.

Please note: The BCWRT Leadership Team is asking all members and guests to wear a mask while inside Hatch Auditorium. We appreciate your cooperation.

CHANCELLORSVILLE - A PYRRHIC VICTORY

A review of Joanna McDonald's January Presentation

By Jim Medeiros

(Editor's note - Ms. McDonald is owed a huge thanks for subbing at the last minute for our originally scheduled speaker Phillip Greenwalt who got caught in a snowstorm, unable to make it to Ft. Caswell.)

Pyrrhic victory: The concept, named after Greek King Pyrrhus, has enshrined the idea that a victory may nonetheless prove so costly, that it fails to uphold strategy.

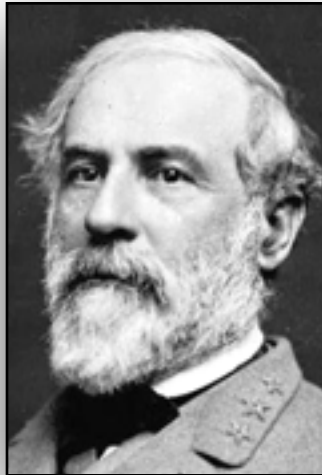
If you never mastered the difference between strategy and tactics, Joanna McDonald's talk on the Pyrrhic victory of Chancellorsville may have left you mystified. Let's clarify simply by saying that strategy involves planning ahead with an important goal in mind. Tactics make up the smaller steps, the skirmishes and battles and techniques (a naval blockade versus an artillery bombardment, for example) that contribute to successfully achieving your strategic goal. Consider Lee's overarching strategy which included Chancellorsville and Gettysburg as part of his tactics.

First, Lee wanted a decisive victory over the Army of the Potomac, such that it could not recover. Next, Lee's strategy included protecting the Confederate capital, Richmond. Finally, the city of Fredericksburg needed liberating from the Yankee yoke. One of the ironies of Lee's Chancellorsville victory lies in the strategic disadvantages it created both with Lee and the rank and file of the army...they began to believe in their own invincibility.

Perhaps Ms. McDonald's most cogent observation of the evening pointed out that civil wars are not won in a single battle, at a single place. And though Chancellorsville chased off the Army of the Potomac, though it bought more breathing space for the Confederacy, the boost in the Army of

Northern Virginia morale blinded them to reality and the importance of losing 13,500 of their 62,000 men in a single battle. The 13,500 included killed, wounded, and missing and are easier to grasp if you think of them as representing the loss of two brigades and a division. These veterans included blooded soldiers who had faced combat before, valuable experience and virtually immediately irreplaceable in spite of Lee's grand strategy. Worse than rank and file losses, holes in leadership honeycombed the army. Forty regimental commanders lay dead or wounded. It takes time to train a common soldier, to discover which ones will not die nor flee the field, and likewise building officers to lead those regiments takes longer than a day, more than a simple help wanted newspaper ad. Unlike Ulysses Grant, Lee never found himself in the comfortable position of having a large population from which to rebuild his army.

Losing forty regimental commanders meant the equivalent of two divisions needed to replace all their regimental commanders. There were probably more officers in Union prison camps than the Confederacy had in their replacement pipeline. Often ascribed to poor leadership, a battle loss such as Gettysburg after the Pyrrhic victory of Chancellorsville can easily lay at the feet of losses in both higher leadership and experienced rank and file. Ms. McDonald summarized quite nicely, Lee's quest for a decisive victory inevitably led him to Appomattox.



Ladies' Department — *By Charen Fink*

The custom of celebrating St. Valentine's Day came to America by way of the English and German settlers. Mass-produced cards did not appear in America until the mid-nineteenth century. But handmade valentines were exchanged as early as the Revolutionary War.

Because of the confusion surrounding the true identity of St. Valentine, the Catholic Church discontinued liturgical veneration of him in 1969. Although Valentine's Day can be traced to ancient Rome, it was the Victorians who originally put a romantic spin in the holiday, held on February 14. In 1537, England's King Henry VII officially declared that day be named St. Valentine's Day. Lovers exchanged elaborate lace-trimmed cards expressing their undying love and devotion.

During the Civil War, the cards cost from one cent to twenty dollars. They ranged from comic to patriotic. Normal postage was three cents, however, soldiers could post a letter or card for free. Red roses were the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. An Ohio newspaper advertised that birds choose their mates on that day, and it being leap year, "It is expected all the marriageable girls will select their mates." Girls were reminded not to forget their soldier lovers. "Keep their courage up with a rousing Valentine."



Wally Rueckel Recognized



Wally Rueckel, co-founder of our round table, was recognized recently by the Civil War Round Table Congress for his efforts in establishing the Congress, a national organization which shares information and suggested tools for sustainability to round table leaders across the country.

Mike Movius, head of the Congress, intended to present Wally a plaque at their annual meeting in September. Due to Covid, the meeting was cancelled.

According to Movius, thanks to Wally's diligence the Congress came into existence, thereby providing a national body to help round tables operate more effectively.

The BCWRT extends hearty congratulations to Wally.



IT'S ALL RELATIVE

For the past several years, BCWRT has collected, published, and shared stories of our members whose relatives fought in the Civil War. The accounts are extremely popular with our members, and also earn compliments from other round tables within in the state and around the country. (Featured two years ago was member Anne Bayles Hager and the gravesite of her two distant sixth cousins three times removed, both killed at the Battle of Cold Harbor.)



We have finally run out of stories, and it is time to acquire some new ones.

Bob Hagerman is our member in charge of the program. Bob notes, "I can work with anyone on their story, providing anything from assisting with writing to suggested edits." Bob says there are no rules. "It can be a detailed account of your relatives involvement, or just a name, rank, and battle information."

To see some of the stories previously featured, go to the BCWRT website (<http://www.brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com>) and click on Members' Soldier Relatives stories.

To contact Bob regarding your story, use this email: b_hagerman@msn.com. He looks forward to hearing from you.

BCWRT and the NC Civil War & Reconstruction History Center

(Editor's note: The following is based on an article written by Wally Rueckel and Charen Fink for the Civil War Round Table Congress. We thought it's worth sharing.)

The Brunswick Civil War Round Table's involvement with the North Carolina Civil War & Reconstruction History Center began shortly after Wally Rueckel became BCWRT's president in 2012. Wally received a call from David Winslow, the project's fund raiser, asking Wally to become an Advisor to the project's Board of Directors. Wally was also asked to suggest several women who also might be interested in becoming Advisors.

BCWRT's Charen Fink and Musette Steck volunteered. At a subsequent meeting, David discussed the project in detail, including getting family members from all 100 NC counties to provide a story on their relatives' involvement in the war. Charen's husband Dan Fink, and Chris Fonvielle, history professor at UNCW, also were added to the BCWRT advisory contingent.

The principal objective of this \$80 million project is to refresh and redirect the mission of the North Carolina Civil War History Center, later renamed the North Carolina Civil War & Reconstruction History Center. This undertaking includes educating and helping visitors to better understand an important piece of North Carolina and American history. Examples of the project's work include physically restoring the site, preserving the history of the site, repairing and rebuilding the barracks and slave quarters, and

repairing and rebuilding the armory and munitions center. In addition, a library is planned with the capability of distributing Civil War books electronically.

How is this \$80 million project funded, you may wonder? The City of Fayetteville committed \$7.5 million, and a similar amount will come from Cumberland County. Private donations total \$12.1 million, and \$8 million came from the Gettysburg Cyclorama. In addition, the state of North Carolina included in its most recent budget \$59.6 million for the project. Groundbreaking is scheduled for July 2024.

The Brunswick Civil War Round Table volunteers attended the first project board meeting in Fayetteville, home of the center. Subsequent meetings were either monthly or quarterly at the site, and attended by local and state

politicians, renowned educators, bankers, local business leaders, as well as several leaders from African-American church groups.

The Brunswick Civil War Round Table volunteers are proud to have been involved in the formation of this project, which like BCWRT, will help educate, promote, and disseminate knowledge of the Civil War to all who visit the center. For more details on the North Carolina Civil War & Reconstruction History Center, please visit their website: <https://nccivilwarcenter.org>.



WARTIME WILMINGTON COMES ALIVE!

A Review of Robert Cooke's Book [By Bruce Jordan](#)

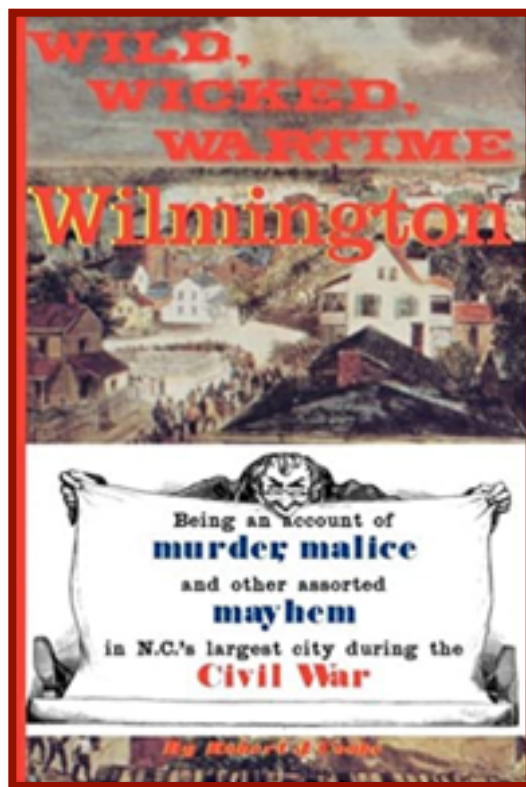
What was Wilmington like during the Civil War? Most Civil War buffs can tell you about Fort Fisher, some can include Fort Anderson. But what happened in the city itself during the war. Few know. Robert J. Cooke's *Wild, Wicked, Wartime Wilmington* can fill in those gaps. This book was published by Dram Tree Books (a local publishing company) in 2009.

The book is a ten year labor of love by Cooke, an amateur historian. He did a deep dive into the archives and libraries to come up with all the vignettes, stories, photographs, and illustrations that make this book come alive. The reader gets a sense from all these vivid descriptions that you are actually there in person. Each chapter is lavishly illustrated with photographs and illustrations, and ends with extensive footnotes.

Wilmington was North Carolina's largest "city" with an 1860 population of 10,000. It possessed a unique combination of a port not easily bombarded by the federal navy and rail connections with Richmond. Wartime Wilmington was full of armed soldiers and sailors, blockade runners and profiteurs, wounded soldiers and sailors in hospitals, and a fearful populace not sure of what was going to happen next. In certain sections of town, the streets were lined with bars of varying quality, as well as brothels. In the late summer of 1862 a yellow fever epidemic swept through the city. All of these elements combine into a wild, wicked, wartime city.

The many stories of personalities and situations give the reader a vibrant sense of what it was like to be in Wilmington. The Civil War in the South was one of many scarcities and an ever present battle between various organizations vying for too little materials. Cooke shows this by citing many letters, meetings, and appeals to

higher authorities. Price inflation rose dramatically, making it difficult for middle and lower levels of society to earn enough to meet the rising cost of living. For example, in 1859 a barrel of flour cost \$6. In early 1865, just before Wilmington fell, the price had risen to between \$700 up to \$800—based on one's negotiating skills.



I had a few wishes to improve this book. It would have helped if there was a more detailed map of Wilmington at the beginning of the

book instead of a detail-less map on page 212. Also, if blockade running was a major aspect of wartime Wilmington, he could have provided more details of these endeavors. Finally, I wonder how Wilmington's lifestyle compared to other Southern cities of similar size.

Do the contents of this book live up to its title? Read this fine book and decide for yourself, but you certainly will know much more about what happened in Wilmington during the Civil War than you did before.

CIVIL WAR VIEWS



In December, member Dick Slease visited the mesmerizing life-size memorial to US Colored Troops at the Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington, capturing these photos, and the one on page 1.

Need a Civil War Book Suggestion?

President John Butler recently researched Civil War books published in 2021. He then visited various book review sites dedicated to history, and ended by searching the Internet to see what Civil War scholars were reading. Here are some of the more highly recommended tomes.

The Civil War in Maryland Reconsidered by Charles W. Mitchell, Jean H. Baker, Richard Bell, Thomas G. Clemens, LSU Press, Nov 9, 2021

The Oxford Handbook of the American Civil War by Lorien Foote and Earl J. Hess, Oxford University Press, Oct 26, 2021

The Battle of Second Manassas: A Captivating Guide to the Second Battle of Bull Run, A Significant Event in the American Civil War by Captivating History, Jul 19, 2021

The First Battle of Manassas: A Captivating Guide to the First Battle of Bull Run That Took Place at the Start of the American Civil War by Captivating History, Jul 5, 2021

Kentucky's Orphan Brigade: The Soldiers who fought for the Confederacy During the American Civil War by Ed Porter Thompson and L. D. Young, Leonaur Ltd., May 16, 2021

The Greatest Escape: A True American Civil War Adventure by Douglas Miller, Lyons Press, Feb 1, 2021

(To be continued in the March newsletter!)

Pictured at our January Meeting

Speaker Joanna McDonald and 198 attendees (including 23 new members and 4 guests!) were present for our January 7 meeting. Some of the happy attendees, including the winner of \$60 from the 50/50 drawing, paused for our camera. Another 80 members attended the meeting via Zoom! (Photos by Chuck Roedema, and E. Gifford Stack)



Pictured at our January Meeting - Continued



MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The February BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, February 1, 2022. The meeting will be held at Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC. See page 2 for details to attend via Zoom.

Registration begins at 6:15 p.m., and the meeting starts promptly at 7 p.m.

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/>. The YouTube BCWRT site is located at: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=brunswick+civil+war+round+table. Contact us at brunswickcwrt@gmail.com.

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

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