



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please remember our February meeting will be held at Generations Church on Rt 211 (for GPS: 4019 Executive Park Blvd, Southport). The church is 3/10 of a mile from the St. James main gate on 211. **DO NOT GO TO FORT CASWELL!!!!!!!**

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - JOHN BUTLER

On behalf of everyone who attended our January meeting, I want to thank the personnel of Generations Church for their outstanding support. Everything went smoothly, including the ease of entering and exiting the property, parking, sound system, cushy seats, and the bright readable slides.



Our February 7 meeting will again be at the Generations Church. The auditorium set up will be the same...plenty of comfortable seating and an excellent sound system. There is ample parking either next to the church or in their gravel parking lot.

Our program this month is a unique, and rarely addressed, topic: how the environment impacted the results of General McClellan's 1862 Peninsula Campaign. Many of us thought the Union failed for lack of planning, poor logistics, lack of reliable intelligence, or a grossly overestimation of the number of Confederate troops. Interestingly,

this month's subject was suggested by several members on our 2022 survey. Thanks to Advisors Gar Dowell and Woody Petchel, they went out and found two experts on the topic. This will be a tag team presentation by Judkin Browning and Tim Silver (see page 2 for their qualifications). You may be surprised to hear how key environmental elements including weather, geology, terrain, and nutrition, helped win the campaign for the South.



We plan to return to Hatch Auditorium in March with Peter Carmichael as our quest speaker. He is always a huge crowd favorite. Chris Mackowski, another presenter we cannot seem to get enough of, headlines April's meeting. Our May speaker to close out the 2022-23 program year is Jaime Martinez. She will deliver a topic we've

not heard before: "Raising Corn, Embankments, and a Little Hell: Impressed Labor and the Wilmington Fortifications."

Hope to see everyone at our February meeting!

John

DID ENVIRONMENT TRUMP ALL AT PENINSULA CAMPAIGN?

Union General George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign of 1862 was meant to put an early end to the Civil War by capturing the Confederate capital of Richmond. It was the first large-scale offensive in the Eastern Theater, but resulted in a humiliating defeat. Why? Perhaps it was the environment!

Most historians attribute McClellan's failure to a number of reasons: his poor battle plan; his inability to effectively use the U.S. Navy to keep his troops supplied; his lack of reliable intelligence, coupled with his dreadfully inaccurate Coastal Survey maps; and his totally inaccurate estimate of Confederate forces.

However, our presenters argue that weather, geology, disease, animals, terrain, and nutrition all played significant roles in the Union defeat. In essence, the environment during the Peninsula Campaign helped illuminate the many ways that natural forces shaped the war, well beyond military tactics, weaponry, and manpower.

The speakers furthermore show the environment McClellan encountered brought out the worst in him, magnifying the personal traits and quirks



that led to some of his most baffling command decisions. Simultaneously, Confederate forces used nature to their advantage, employing strategies that allowed their armies to stave off a potentially devastating conquest of Richmond.

Our guest speakers, Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver, presentation is entitled, "Slogging



to Richmond: Environmental Influences on the Union Failed Peninsula Campaign, 1862."

They are noted authors and educators. Judkin Browning is

Professor of Military History and Director of the History Graduate Program at Appalachian State University, in Boone, NC. Timothy Silver is a recently retired Professor of Environmental History at App State. Besides co-authoring the respected book *An Environmental History of the Civil War*, the two have written four other Civil War tomes between them.

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

Link- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83017891159?pwd=KzBCb21oNW94Ly9HOHJCRk93TWxiUT09>
Meeting ID - 830 1789 1159 **Passcode** - 978101

If attending in person, we suggest you pre-register. *Remember you must pre-register for each meeting*, so any previous pre-registration won't work for February's meeting! Starting Friday, January 27, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, February 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. Bring the ticket(s) to Generations Church to the on-site kiosk. 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 7 meeting takes place at Generations Church on Rt 211. 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.

Defending the Arteries of Rebellion

A review of Neil Chatelain's January Presentation [By Jim Medeiros](#)

The best piece of information from Neil Chatelain's discussion of the Confederacy's defense of the Mississippi River tributary system listed their naval innovations:

- Commerce Raiding
- Privateering
- Amphibious and Joint Operations between Navy and Army
- The first American Ironclad – the CSS Manassas
- Rams
- Forming a fleet of rams
- Submersibles—first sinking of an enemy ship by a submersible
- Naval torpedoes (water mines) which were responsible for sinking forty Union ships, more than the number sunk by all the Confederate naval forces along the Mississippi system

Historians ignore most of these strengths, but to his credit Mr. Chatelain did not. However, in spite of detailed planning to build a fleet to equal federal forces along the rivers, the Confederacy failed. The insurmountable obstacles dogged them throughout the war.

First, Confederate organizational structure resembled a house of cards. The welter of organizations formed the equivalent of an Abbott and Costello routine leaving the question "Who's on first" unanswerable. Forces operating ships included navy and marines, privateers, the Revenue Service, the army, the Confederate River Defense Fleet (with some hulls boasting only a single cannon), the Louisiana Navy (with a whopping 183 men), blockade runners and government contracted civilian steamers. Lines of command back to

Richmond remained unclear. Even deliveries from shipbuilding plans balkanized the 1862 campaign's strengths: they actually floated three ironclads and thirty-five wooden hulls, assigning the force to the navy (30), the Louisiana navy (two), and the River Defense Fleet (fourteen).

The Union's economy of size also defeated the Confederacy in the riverine campaign. During the Civil War the peak of Confederate navy manning hit 5,000 men versus the 50,000 the Union navy boasted. During the 1862 River Campaign, the Union fought with seventy-eight (including nine ironclads) ships versus the forty-six of the Confederacy. The Confederacy certainly succeeded in sinking some Union ironclads, but the boats stubbornly refused to remain sunk as Union divers raised hulls and sent them back to war. At the battle for Memphis (depicted below), the ships of the River Defense Force did not have enough coal to steam away so they remained to fight and all but one of the



ships was sunk. In the largest naval battle of the Civil War over New Orleans, Admiral Daniel Farragut took seventeen ships past Confederate ships and forts and destroyed twelve Confederate ships. The size of a navy counts for something.

Finally, despite inferior size, the southern navy achieved some tactical victories with their sinking of wooden and ironclad Union vessels, but they never had a clear strategic goal. They could react to Yankee incursions but could not close the deal.

So, the defense of the arteries of rebellion along the Mississippi waved tantalizing hope to the South while contributing to its demise.

SECOND FORT ANDERSON TOUR SCHEDULED FOR MARCH

On October 8 of last year, Dr. Chris Fonvielle led 43 BCWRT and CFCWRT members on a most interesting tour of Fort Anderson, which is located on Route 133, between Southport and Leland. More folks than could be accommodated wished to attend, so for them and others who'd like to take the tour, Chris has graciously agreed to lead it again.

On Saturday, March 18, starting at 10 a.m., we'll do a reprise of a site which Dr. Fonvielle researched extensively while doing his graduate studies. The tour begins at the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Visitor Center, will last 3½-4 hours, and cost \$20 per person, which includes bottled water and snacks. There will be some hiking on paths through wooded areas to view original Confederate trenches so sturdy footwear is recommended.



Brunswick Town, an early colonial trade and governmental center on the Cape Fear River,



had been a virtual ghost town in the decades prior to the Civil War. Then, as part of fortifications to protect the crucial harbor of

Wilmington, the Confederates built a fortress around the ruins of the town, first calling it Fort St. Philip (after the now roofless church that you'll see on the tour), then Fort



Anderson. After the fall of Fort Fisher in January 1865, Confederate General Braxton Bragg pulled his forces up river closer to Wilmington, including to the large earthworks with armaments at Fort Anderson. Union Major General John Schofield led 12,000 Federal troops up through Brunswick County while Admiral David Porter shelled the fort from the Cape Fear River beginning on February 16.

And then? Chris will provide 'the rest of the story.'

Attendance is limited, and this second tour may sell out as well! Send an email with name(s) and number of attendees, cell phone number and email address to John Walsh at jdwalsh1@gmail.com. Then follow up by mailing a check, made out to BCWRT, to John Walsh, 2795 Golfmaster Ct, Southport, NC 28461. If not already sold out, you can also sign up and pay at the Sutlers Table prior to our February meeting. The tour rain date is one week later, Saturday, March 25. Questions? Send an email or text to John – 609 651-7719.

MAKE AN OFFER...AND TAKE IT HOME

Skip Maxwell, BCWRT's Manager of Donations, recently announced there are bargains to be had at our February meeting! According to Skip, almost any offer will be considered. "The sale will raise money that we'll use for our mission of educating and promoting interest in the American Civil War," he noted.

The following collectible items of Civil War military art are yours for the offering!

A James Thomas Neumann framed print (26 3/4" x 22 3/4") depicting Turner Ashby of the 7th Virginia Cavalry, and eight solid pewter artwork figures produced by Chilmark Pewter Studios depicting various Civil War personalities and scenes.

Please come by the table in the lobby of Generations Church prior to the February meeting to see these works of art, make a purchase offer, and support BCWRT's continuing efforts to provide outstanding programs.



CANNON SHOTS



The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table (CFCWRT) invites BCWRT members to a tour of Sugar Loaf with Chris Fonvielle on Saturday, February 11. For details, contact Yelena Howell, 910-431-6102, or ybh2035@uncw.edu.



Cameron Art Museum celebrates the U.S. Colored Troops and the Battle of Forks Road on Saturday, February 18, with speakers, performance artists, and costumed living historians. For program details, please visit CAM's website or contact the museum directly - <https://www.cameronartmuseum.org/> or 910-395-5999.



Wade Sokolosky will present a program titled "North Carolina's Confederate Hospitals" at the Thursday, 7 p.m., February 9 meeting of the CFCWRT at St. John's Episcopal Church, 1219 Forest Hills Drive, in Wilmington. All BCWRT members are cordially invited to the meeting.



Our Sutler's Table folks say they are again accepting book donations...with one caveat: all books must relate to the Civil War or Reconstruction. Nothing else accepted.

NOTES FROM JANUARY'S BOD MEETING

Your Board of Directors, along with interested Advisors, meets monthly to discuss items that will make our round table more interesting, run better, and keep our membership engaged. President John Butler leads the two-hour meeting with a packed agenda that he keeps moving along. These meetings, open to all members, are held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Southport, one week following our membership meeting, and begin at 10 a.m. If you wish to attend or have suggestions for the Board, please contact John at jlbutler2007@gmail.com. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 14.

Here are the main items of interest from the January 10 meeting.

1. Consensus from members and Leadership Team was the Generations Church meeting went very well. There were many positive comments on venue and speaker.
2. Our current balance is \$7,349.
3. Steve Rauschkolb was approved as an Advisor (see below).
4. John Walsh, BCWRT's Tour Coordinator, gave details of the March 18 second tour of Ft. Anderson (see page 4). He is also working on a Cape Fear River tour for May, and continues researching a potential tour of Charleston for this fall.
5. Skip Maxwell will try another "make an offer" sale of pewter figures at February's meeting (see page 5).

New Advisor Chosen

At their January meeting, the Board of Directors unanimously elected Steve Rauschkolb as an Advisor. "Steve brings a wealth of experience, as well as a keen interest in the Civil War to our round table," noted BCWRT President John Butler.



A member of the round table for four years, Steve's professional background is sales and marketing in the

telecommunications and pharmaceutical industries. He resides in Leland and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Civil War Round Table Congress.

When asked how he became interested in the Civil War, Steve provided an insightful response. "My love and interest in the Civil War began when I was seven years old. When other boys my age were playing with

World War II toy soldiers, I had a Blue and Gray Battle Set and spent my days defending "the angle" at Gettysburg. Reading *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara was the catalyst for a lifelong journey of Civil War study. When I formed my consulting firm in 2007, I became affiliated with The Lincoln Leadership Institute at Gettysburg and have hosted more than a dozen groups of corporate executives on their "Transformational Journey from Gettysburg" program. During this three-day, immersive training set on the Gettysburg Battlefield, we use metaphors from each of the three days of the battle to demonstrate how these leadership lessons can be applied in today's business environment. I am also working with a Pulitzer Prize-nominated author on enhancing the social media presence for his Gettysburg Trilogy. Finally, I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Civil War Roundtable Congress."

Welcome to the Leadership Team, Steve!

Thank You Note from BCWRT Scholarship Winner

President John Butler recently received a thoughtful thank you note from the recipient of our \$1,000 scholarship for 2022-23 at the University of North Carolina - Wilmington. We think this young man has excellent manners and a bright future. Here is his correspondence.

Hello. My name is Brian Fiore and I am currently in my first year as a graduate student in the public history program. A goal of mine is to use this program to help me become an architectural historian. I want to work with the city of Wilmington to protect and preserve the history of Wilmington.

I was ecstatic when I learned that I received your donor-funded scholarship. It was a great surprise to me and my family when I found out that I was awarded this scholarship.

The funds have been used to help pay off my first semester of graduate school. It helped my tuition costs go down a lot!

Thank you for providing this scholarship to the students of UNCW. I am honored to have received your scholarship.

Call to Arms reached out to Brian, asking for a photo and hometown. Within minutes, he replied stating he's from Wilmington and included a nice photo. We've invited him to join our round table (dues-free for all students), and be our guest at a future meeting. We hope he'll be able to attend.



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SCHOLARSHIP BACKGROUNDER - In 2019, the BCWRT Leadership Team discussed the possibility of setting up a scholarship program at a local college. Thanks to board member Tish Gordon who spearheaded the research on how our round table might get this done, we established a program with UNCW. Each year, assuming funds permit, we award a \$1,000 history scholarship to the school in the name of a BCWRT member who has made a significant difference to our round table.

To date, four scholarships have been awarded:

2019-2020 honored Tom O'Donnell a cofounder of the BCWRT and its first president. The scholarship was awarded to Matthew Poirier.

2020-21 was given in the name of Ed Bearss, a renowned historian and longtime supporter and presenter at the BCWRT. The scholarship was awarded to Aeris Carter.

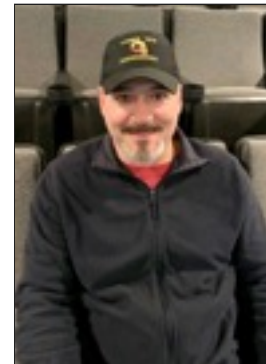
2021-22 honored Max Williams, a key member in establishing the BCWRT and our original program director. The scholarship was awarded to Samuel Flowers.

2022-23 was given in the name of Dan Fink who contributed columns for the newsletter reviewing our monthly speakers. As mentioned above, Brian Fiore was the scholarship recipient.

2023-24 will be awarded later this year and will honor our past treasurer, Gary Krupp.

Pictured at our January Meeting

Speaker Neil Chatelain and 321 attendees (including 24 new members and six guests!) attended our January 3 meeting. Some of the happy participants, including the winner of \$160 in our 50/50 drawing, paused for our camera. Another 46 members attended the meeting via Zoom. *(Photos by Chuck Roedema and E. Gifford Stack)*



MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The February BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, February 7, 2023.
The meeting will be held at Generations Church on Rt 211, 3/10 of a mile from the St. James main gate. See page 2 for details to attend via Zoom.

Registration begins at 6:15 p.m., and the meetings 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.

Our Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/>.

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

Our website address is: <https://brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com>

Contact us at: brunswickcwr@gmail.com.

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

2023 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND ADVISORS

John Butler: President & Director

Ann Birdsall: VP & Director

(Vacant): VP & Director

Jim Kane: Secretary & Director

Tom Kehoe: Treasurer & Director

Bruce Jordan: Director

Chuck Roedema: Director

E. Gifford Stack: Director

Peter Carmichael: Advisor

Gar Dowell: Advisor

Jim Dunn: Advisor

Charen Fink: Advisor

Chris Fonvielle: Advisor

Jim McKee: Advisor

Chris Mackowski: Advisor

Kathy O'Donnell: Advisor

Roy Pender: Advisor

Woody Petchel: Advisor

Steve Rauschkolb: Advisor

Wally Rueckel: Advisor

Wade Sokolosky: Advisor

John Wall: Advisor

Peter Whelan: Advisor

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