



# Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please remember our January and February meetings 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 FT CASWELL!!!!!!!**

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - JOHN BUTLER

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and an opportunity to spend some time with family and friends.



It's the start of a new year, so we begin January with a temporary new venue for what promises to be an excellent talk by Neil Chatelain. As you probably know, Hatch Auditorium is getting a

much needed renovation and this will take at least two months. So the BCWRT will be using Generations Church for our monthly presentations for January 3 and February 7. If Hatch is not ready in March, then we will hold our March 7 meeting at Generations also.



When you arrive at the church you will have plenty of parking. The first lot is right next to the church on the left off of Executive Park Blvd. They have another lot off of Committee Drive (the next left off of Executive Park Blvd). They are both marked. You will have two entrances to the lobby - one on the east side and another on the west side of the Church that is more convenient to the second parking lot. When you come into the lobby you will find our registration desks and the Sutler's table.

There will be plenty of comfortable seating in the sanctuary. You can see all the screens no matter where you sit, and the audio will be good throughout. We even have raised seating in the back for those that liked the balcony at Hatch Auditorium...LOL!

Having talked to the local sheriff's office they did not think we will need traffic control when people leave. So we will try it without them this first time and then evaluate it again. I recommend that if you live in St James you make a right turn onto Rt 211 and go through their main gate, while people who live in Southport and Leland make the left turn. This will help with everyone's exit.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at Generations Church for all of their help. They have been very gracious and accommodating to our needs. Also, a big **thank you** goes to our volunteers, who took a lot of their time during the holiday season to make sure we were ready for the meeting location change.

Hope to see everyone at our temporary venue on Tuesday, Jan 3!

*John*

# **BATTLE FOR THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

During the Civil War, riverine warfare was a new concept. Both sides required waterborne assets to transport and sustain major land forces, conduct amphibious expeditions and sieges, interdict enemy trade, communications and transportation, and protect friendly commerce. Wooden and ironclad river gunboats would be employed along inland rivers, especially the mighty Mississippi River. This will be the topic, entitled, "Defending the Arteries of Rebellion," presented by historian and author Neil Chatelain at our Tuesday, January 3 meeting.



Control of the Mississippi River and its tributaries was a slow and bloody struggle, one of the longest and most challenging campaigns of the Civil War encompassing a 700-mile wet corridor from Mound City, Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico. Importantly, it played a vital role in the outcome of the war. As Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman wrote to his wife Ellen on June 10, 1862, "I think the Mississippi, the great artery of America, whatever power holds it, it holds the continent."

Both sides were determined to gain the upper hand. The Confederacy challenged Union control of the Mississippi River Valley at every turn. Each government was responsible for introducing innovations that spread to other theaters of the conflict, including ironclad warships, synchronized joint operations, reintroduction of the ram, and underwater torpedoes.



Guest speaker Neil Chatelain is adjunct professor of history at Lone Star College in Texas. The former

U.S. Navy Surface Warfare Officer is a graduate of the University of New Orleans, the University of Houston, and the University of Louisiana-Monroe. Neil researches U.S. Naval History, concentrating on the Civil War. He is a member of Emerging Civil War, and a prolific author, including *Defending the Arteries of Rebellion: Confederate Naval Operations in the Mississippi River Valley, 1861 – 1865; Fought Like Devils:*

*The Confederate Gunboat McRae;* as well as articles for magazines, journals, and online sites.

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/84488385539?pwd=OUxVRkZ2RGRSUHJVTFBCWkFhV243dz09>  
**Meeting ID** - 844 8838 5539 **Passcode** - 524589

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 January's meeting!* Starting Friday, December 23, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, January 3, 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, January 3 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.

# The Legacy of Appomattox

A review of Beth Parnicza's December Presentation By Jim Medeiros

To many Americans, the surrender of Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox marked the end of the Civil War, however, to others it meant much more than that. It set the tone for perceptions on the whole Civil War, albeit some perceptions seem contradictory. Considered an attempt to set the tone for Reconstruction, would Appomattox with harsher surrender terms have made Reconstruction and reintegration of the country smoother? And, perhaps most important of all, what does the surrender at Appomattox mean to each of us personally?

Ms. Parnicza's questions not only built the bedrock for her presentation but also allowed her to seamlessly draw out audience participation in a group of over 300. Although promising not to put her listeners on the spot, she several times asked for a show of hands to confirm



what her listeners thought of various aspects of the surrender. Difficult carrying on conversations in large groups at the best of times, she managed to draw the members into thoughtfulness without getting drawn down distracting side roads. Nonetheless, the most fascinating part of the hour came in tidbits of lesser-known history.

Some scholars remark that placing the surrender in Appomattox brought the Civil War to a sleepy backwater, yet our guest reminded us the first local casualty in the county died in October of 1861 without ever seeing combat. This early death by typhoid fever served as the local example that the war demanded adaptations throughout the Confederacy and Union alike. For Lee and much of the South, Appomattox represented the start of the Southern narrative as mirrored in Lee's farewell address emphasizing the soldiers' service and devotion and

identifying defeat handed to them by overwhelming numbers and resources. The legend of the noble cause came easily foreshadowed. On the other hand, for former slaves such as John Robinson of Appomattox, the surrender meant emancipation. In fact, for years afterward local freed slaves continued to refer to the anniversary of the surrender as "Freedom Day." Further, at one time across the country free African-Americans met in "Appomattox Clubs" not just socially but to hear famous African-American leaders discuss equal rights. Appomattox meant freedom to a much broader population. A mysterious stone plaque the National Park Service cannot explain, today extols the place as the site of the loss of the country of the Confederacy. Similarly, when an attempt was made to foster a Jubilee Reunion at Appomattox early in the twentieth century, The Richmond Times-Dispatch decried it as memorializing a great loss and the "enfranchisement of the negro". Clearly, Appomattox meant sadness to the white Southerner. The dream of a great Jubilee at Appomattox faded into oblivion.

Perhaps Ms. Parnicza's greatest messages were, first, we all see history through the personal lens of our own beliefs. Second, knowing who first held our beliefs and "why" helps us to better understand ourselves. And ultimately, she invited all of us to visit Appomattox Courthouse to learn something about each and every one of us.



# Wall Elected New Advisor

At their December meeting, the Board of Directors selected John Wall as an Advisor to help the leadership team with the governance for our round table.

John has an interesting connection to the Civil War - he had two grandfathers fight in the war as infantry for the West Virginia Volunteers, one was wounded at the Battle of New Market with the VMI cadets. John graduated from the US Naval Academy, then served seven years on active duty, including one year in Vietnam, with the US Army. He was in the Army Reserves for an additional 16 years, retiring as a Lt. Colonel. In civilian life, John had a very successful managerial career with Eastman Kodak. He has been an active member of the BCWRT almost since its inception. He and his wife reside in the Arboretum in Caswell Beach. He was welcomed aboard by President John Butler who noted, "John definitely possesses the interest and skill sets to contribute and help our organization grow forward."



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## **NOTES FROM DECEMBER'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 gathering at Hatch, and begin at 10 a.m. If you wish to attend or have suggestions for the Board, please contact John at [jlbutler2007@gmail.com](mailto:jlbutler2007@gmail.com). The next meeting is Tuesday, January 10.

Here are the main items of interest from the December 13 meeting.

1. Our current balance is \$6,330.
2. John Wall was approved as an Advisor (see above).
3. Our tour coordinators are planning another trip to Fort Anderson, and it will again be lead by Chris Fonvielle. The tentative date is Saturday, March 18.
4. There was a lengthy discussion regarding our next two meetings at Generations Church, including the new logistics needed at the church.
5. As a federal employee, Beth Parnicza, our December speaker, could not accept an honorarium for her talk. Instead she requested BCWRT make a donation to the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. The Board voted unanimously to provide a \$300 contribution to the site.
6. The Board voted to continue showing in our newsletter the amount we've donated to each recipient. However, for other publications we will simply list the organizations and the total amount of money donated since our founding in 2010.

**2023 OFFICERS ELECTED**

At our December meeting officers for the coming year were selected...and there were few surprises. John Butler remains President; Ann Birdsall stays as the VP for Programs; our Treasurer is still Tom Kehoe; and once again Jim Kane is the Secretary. Unfortunately, the Second VP slot remains vacant. The BCWRT bylaws require officer elections each December with the winners serving for the following calendar year. See the last page of the newsletter for the Directors and Advisors that make up the remainder of the leadership team.

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**A Book Review of “Ways and Means: Lincoln and his Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War” – By Bruce Jordan**

Many books have been written on the military aspects of the Civil War, but a mere handful on financing the war. The primary function of Roger Lowenstein’s **Ways and Means: Lincoln and his Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War** (Penguin Press, 2022) is to explain how the Civil War was financed by both sides. This book is a nicely paced and well-written narrative.

At the start of the war, leaders on both sides faced some serious financial handicaps. No one had any experience handling the ever increasing financial demands the conflict created. Salmon P. Chase, Lincoln’s Secretary of the Treasury, believed initially in the Jacksonian belief of no central bank and small governmental interaction with society. Christopher Memminger, the Southern Secretary, had been a lawyer. Most of the pre-war government’s revenue came from collecting tariffs on imported goods. The annual federal budget was around \$80 million. During the war, the U.S. Treasury alone spent nearly that amount every month. The Confederacy spent \$2 billion. The nation’s banking system was highly fragmented, consisting of 1,400 state chartered, mostly local banks. There were about 8,000 different types of monetary bills in circulation.

The options the two Secretaries of the Treasury faced were they could tax, they

could borrow, or they could print money. The financial narrative of the war was essentially the story of how the opposing camps chose from among these alternatives. Each of these three options affected the potency of the other two.

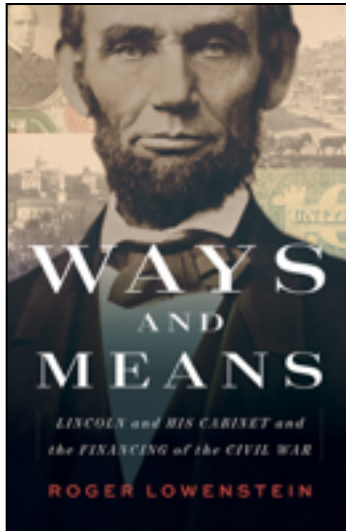
Chase proved to be the better of the two. He was the beneficiary of a more robust and diverse economy that grew during the war, and of a more flexible and effective president. He raised taxes, pushing the tariff up to 47% and creating the first income tax. Over the course of the war taxes provided 21% of the federal budget, compared to only 5 to 6% by the Confederacy. In February 1862, the Legal Tender Act created a national paper money, nicknamed “Greenbacks” because the back side of the bill was printed in green ink. By the war’s end, \$431 million greenbacks were in circulation. Much of the book centers on the various bond drives Chase initiated and his interactions with Jay Cooke, the Union’s most effective bond salesman. With the National Banking Act in February 1863, Chase laid the foundations for nationally chartered banks. A sign of his overall effectiveness was the Union debt was \$2.68 billion in 1865 (41 times as much as the federal debt in 1860), but Northern inflation during the war rose roughly 80%.

*(Continued next page)*

## Book Review - Continued

Several counterpoint chapters illustrate the Southern economic problems and mistakes. Southern decision makers started the war with a cotton embargo, when shipping all the cotton they could early in the war could have provided enough money to bankroll several years of combat expenses. They also drained the civilian sector of men, food, and other resources, over-allocating those resources to their armies. In the spring of 1863 Southern "tax collectors" went after livestock and crops with a 10% tax-in-kind, starving the civilians in order to feed the army. Lacking an organized governmental structure to collect this tax, it mostly antagonized their civilians. Southerners resisted any attempts to centralize taxation and were hindered by their states' rights beliefs. The only recourse Memminger could use was printing paper money. In 1864 alone they printed over 370 million new paper notes. By the end of the war Southern inflation was roughly 9000%.

Therefore, **Ways and Means** can easily be summarized with this quote from a Confederate veteran: "The Yankees did not whip us in the field. We were whipped in the Treasury Department." Chase is the central character for much of the book, and his relationships with Lincoln and Jay Cooke, the Union's super war bond salesman take



up many pages. But what emerges is a clear picture of the politics and ideas that went into the Union's many efforts to finance their part in the war. Southern economic policies and their decision-making efforts offer a contrasting picture of how Union efforts gave them a much better chance than their opponents. To summarize, the North had more successes than stumbles, while the South had more stumbles than successes.

Lowenstein's writing style is clear and straight forward, making lots of financial facts and figures easily understandable to the reader. A minor flaw of this book is that Lowenstein states how the Union economy grew dramatically during the war, but he doesn't give much explanation and evidence to support this claim.

This review barely skims over some of the many highlights in this book. There is a wealth of information and relevant anecdotes that make this a very interesting and educational read. If you want to get a solid understanding of how the Union finances helped win the Civil War, how Lincoln's Republicans helped lay the foundations of a more modern government, and how Southern efforts crippled their chances, I highly recommend that you read this excellent book.

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It's not too early to consider attending one of the premier Civil War Conferences in the country. For nearly 40 years, the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College has hosted a premiere annual summer conference bringing leading historians and public audiences together for lectures, battlefield tours, small group discussions, and roundtable conversations about the Civil War era. Sessions, lodging, and meals are held on the 200-acre college campus. This year's event, June 9-14, features 35 distinguished speakers and tour guides. See their website for details://[www.gettysburg.edu/civil-war-institute/summer-conference/2023-cwi-conference](http://www.gettysburg.edu/civil-war-institute/summer-conference/2023-cwi-conference).

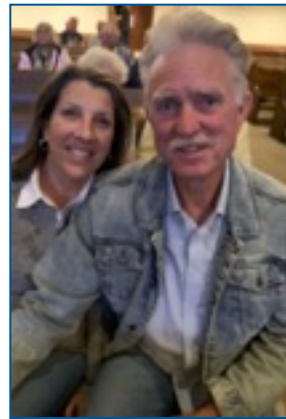
# CIVIL WAR VIEWS



On a chilly December weekend, member E. Gifford Stack visited Petersburg National Battlefield and Pamplin Historical Park, site of a tobacco plantation and where the Union successfully broke through the siege. Top left clockwise: the rather small and dated Petersburg National Battlefield Visitors Center; lots of artillery exhibits throughout the combat zone; EGS at the entrance of Pamplin Historical Park's impressive museum; earthworks parapet and ditch; Tudor Hall which from October 1864 to March 1865 served as headquarters for Confederate General Samuel McGowan; and two soldiers permanently resting at the museum's entrance. (Photos by E. Gifford Stack & PHP staff member)

# Pictured at our December Meeting

Speaker Beth Parnicza and 319 attendees (including 17 new members and seven guests!) attended our December 6 meeting. Some of the happy participants, including the winner of \$161 in our 50/50 drawing, paused for our camera. Another 43 members attend the meeting via Zoom. (Photos by Chuck Roedema, Pat de Barros, and E. Gifford Stack)





# **MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES**

The January BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, January 3, 2023.  
The meeting will be held at Generations Church on Rt 211, 3/10 of a mile from the St. James main gate. See pages 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](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](mailto: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  
Wally Rueckel: Advisor  
Wade Sokolosky: Advisor  
John Wall: Advisor  
Peter Whelan: Advisor

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**Call to Arms Editor:**  
**E. Gifford Stack ([egstack44@gmail.com](mailto:egstack44@gmail.com))**

