



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



I wanted to take a few minutes to review the recent membership survey. This was our first such effort in our 11 year history. Let me thank the 179 of you that took the survey. The BCWRT Leadership Team greatly appreciates your participation. The number of responses is almost 30 percent of our memberships. As surveys go, this is a very high return rate. If you want a detailed look at the questions, responses, and comments, use [this link](#) to access the survey results.

Overall 90 percent of the membership is satisfied with the BCWRT. You think the registration processes (online and in person) are easy. You're happy with the newsletter (*Call to Arms*) and think the website is fine. Most people like the Hatch auditorium for our live meetings, but some think the seats are too hard, and we have had issues with the sound. I cannot solve the seat problem, but we will continue to work on the sound system, assisting the A/V technicians for each meeting. Rest assured we always will focus on this issue because it is very important in order for you to have a pleasant, rewarding experience.

You like our 60 minute program length and speakers. Gar Dowell (VP of Programs) is taking your suggestions for speaker topics so that we incorporate these

recommendations into future meetings. You expressed interest in more tours. John Walsh is working on the schedule for the upcoming program year, more details to follow. Speaking of tours, you should take advantage of Jim McKee's very informative tours of Fort Caswell prior to our April and May meetings. (See page 7 for details.) Most people like the Hybrid Zoom option during the pandemic as it's a perfect option if illness, distance, or other issues prevent you from coming to a live meeting.

We plan to continue the Zoom option, as well as provide a video recording on YouTube one week after a meeting. Eighty percent of the members want us to bring back coffee and cookies and

we will...once it is safe to do so and a couple of volunteers come forward to run it. You as members are okay with our donations to appropriate Civil War related organizations/sites. We will continue to focus on local entities in order to further enhance the Civil War experience in our area.

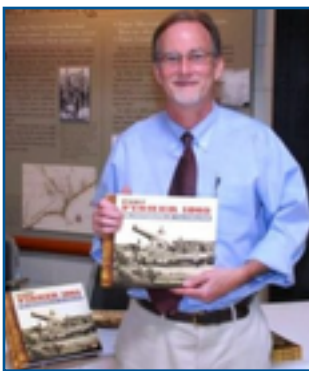
I believe membership surveys are an important way to allow the membership to voice their opinion about the organization. My plan is to conduct one of these surveys once a year, albeit it those future ones will probably be shorter. Of course, if you have a suggestion, idea, or issue, don't wait for a survey. I welcome your comments anytime at brunswickcwrt@gmail.com.

(Continued on page 6)

Survey Says...

Fonvielle Sure to Enlighten on the Wilmington Campaign

Last month we heard about Sherman's coastal North Carolina campaign, and at our March meeting we will get the lowdown on how the Union forces captured Fort Fisher and Wilmington, presented by Chris Fonvielle, THE expert on the battles for these critical locales for the South. His talk, "Closing Down the Kingdom: The Wilmington Campaign," highlights our Tuesday, March 1, meeting.



Chris is rated by members as a top notch storyteller, as well as being one of our most popular speakers. His presentation will provide fascinating accounts of Union military operations to

capture, as well as Confederate efforts to defend Wilmington, the South's last major Atlantic port stronghold in late 1864. He will discuss the battles for Fort Fisher — sometimes referred to as the "Gibraltar of the South" due to its extreme strategic importance — during Christmas and mid-January of 1864-65, which turned out to be the largest U.S. Navy bombardments of the Civil War. Chris will then examine why the Federals took another 30 days to capture Wilmington, a vital Confederate port of 9,553, nearly the same size as Atlanta.

Chris, a longstanding Advisor with BCWRT, is a distinguished retired professor emeritus in the Dept. of History at UNCW. He is a native of Wilmington with a lifelong interest in the American Civil War, North Carolina, and Cape Fear history. He has written and published numerous books and articles including *The Wilmington Campaign: Last*

Rays of Departing Hope; Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear: An Illustrated History; and, *Fort Fisher 1865: The Photographs of T.H. O'Sullivan.*

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 six meetings this program year, you must pre-register again as a meeting ticket is only good that (one) month. Starting Friday, February 18, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, March 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, March 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.

NO VICTORY WITHOUT BULLETS...and BEANS

A review of Wade Sokolosky's February Presentation

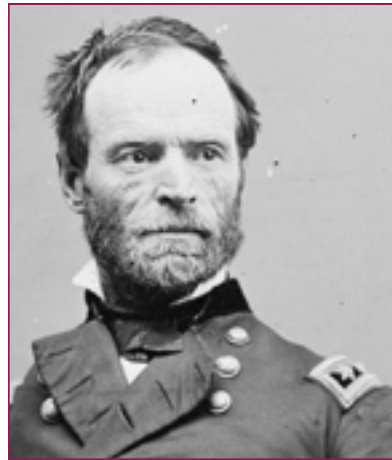
By Jim Medeiros

Colonel W. W. Wright's men (heroes of General Sherman's Carolina victory) charge machine gun nests with their rifles, throw their bodies on hand grenades, and lay out the enemy in windrows. Heroes, obviously, can't do a thing without guns and bullets...or beans and shoe leather. For guest historian Wade Sokolosky, the language of logistics can even be the language of heroes as William T. Sherman's army demonstrated here in eastern North Carolina.

Sherman's march to the sea proved a marvel of logistical daring. His army of 60,000 men and thousands of straggling hangers-on survived partly on forage retrieved daily by assigned groups called "bummers." Bummers returned with enough food, fire and fodder to march the army across the deep south. By the time Sherman reached Savannah in December 1864, Grant wanted to reunite him with the force surrounding Richmond. Logistics, however, dictated otherwise since Grant did not have sufficient naval vessels to move the men. Having walked across the South, Sherman proposed marching to Virginia through the Carolinas to reach supplies. Once again, the army daringly assumed it could resupply Sherman's 60,000 men and others.

Obstacles to resupply came in multiple shapes. First, when the Union took Wilmington, not only did the Confederates destroy rolling stock in the port city and anything worth converting to military use, but also they leveled a 372-foot railroad bridge. Denuded of transport and supplies, Wilmington failed as a primary port of entry. The role of primary port fell to Morehead City, ostensibly with the New Burn Railroad

linked to Goldsboro. However, seventeen miles of track had been torn out between New Bern and Kinston. Grant ordered Innis Palmer to move his men west and rebuild the missing track. Palmer failed. Grant and Sherman counted on the three railroads converging on Goldsboro, but those railroads either rested in Confederate hands or were destroyed. Further, the unpleasantness continued as Sherman's army actually approached Goldsboro and discovered a second bridge destroyed.



Nonetheless, heroes waited in the wings from the Quartermaster General to privates. The Quartermaster Corps found 98 ships (most civilian contractors) for the resupply effort, bringing in thirteen locomotives, ninety-six pieces of rolling railroad stock and 15,000 railroad ties. To facilitate the unloading at the secondary (now

primary) port of entry at Morehead City, Colonel W. W. Wright, chief railroad officer in Sherman's army, replaced the seventeen miles of missing track on the New Bern Line and also expanded the Morehead berths from two to eight ships--four times the original capacity. The Commissary, too, worked miracles from February to May 1, 1865, amassing nearly five million pounds of coffee, sugar, and bread, plus 5,600 barrels of salt beef and pork. On arrival in Goldsboro at the end of March, Sherman found no supplies to replenish shoes, trousers, and shirts for his 100,000 men. Nonetheless, he completed resupply by April 7. (See page 6 for the complete list)

Certainly, a number of Union commanders gave weak support to the North Carolina campaign, yet when his staff advocated that Sherman mete out punishments, he declared himself satisfied with the prodigies accomplished. Victory is its own reward.



Do you have experience creating or maintaining websites? The BCWRT needs to replace our antique site. If you can assist, please contact President John Butler at brunswickwrt@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Ladies' Department — *By Charen Fink*

This month's topic (a scholarly study) may be somewhat controversial, but during the mid-nineteenth-century prostitutes blended into the western frontier. As the Civil War was winding down, men were traveling west to seek their fortunes in the West and the Alaska frontier. It was especially difficult for women to find work when their husbands and fathers were either killed or maimed and could not support the women and their children. A more polite and acceptable terminology, soiled doves, will be used henceforth in the article.

Many women did not resort to the sporting life but served a very useful purpose when they arrived in the western frontier. Some of the honorable occupations included laundress, cook, nurse and a very few owned legitimate businesses. Then there were the rest who habitually used their bodies for profit. These were the soiled doves whose life span was shortened through disease, abuse, murder, neglect, age, conduct or race, etc. Herein, the various strata of their "occupation" will be explored.

There were approximately 50,000 such women in the trans-Mississippi west, who were known by a fanciful European phrase, "demi-monde." Usually, they went by a false name, used a make-believe past, and left few written documents for future historians to peruse.

Soiled doves worked in four styles: brothel dweller, saloon and dance hall worker, crib woman, or streetwalker. Women in brothels enjoyed the best status. And because they moved around so much their status would also change. Cries were common throughout frontier towns. They were small structures clustered in an alley or along a roadway.

Society has always frowned upon soiled doves, but how else were most of these women going to survive, when as a last resort, they adopted to selling their bodies.

Some things never change, even today. Does sexual promiscuity lead a woman to become a professional soiled dove?

(To be continued next month)



Clockwise from top left: Cries in nineteenth century Yukon; brothel; soiled dove of late 1800s; and saloon women in Colorado.

FORT CASWELL TOURS OFFERED AGAIN

BCWRT's Tour Director John Walsh has good news. "Immediately preceding both the April 5 and May 3 meetings we will again offer a tour of historic Fort Caswell, located immediately adjacent to Hatch Auditorium. This is a rare opportunity to tour this iconic fort. As an aside, all our previous Fort Caswell tours have sold out."

The tour leader, Jim McKee, spoke at our December 2021 meeting on the construction, significance, and ultimate fate of this Confederate stronghold which was captured by Union forces in 1865. He is considered THE expert on Fort Caswell, and all his prior tours gained rave reviews.

Here are the details:

- Sign up for either the April 5 or May 3 tour by sending an email or text to John Walsh at jdwalsh1@gmail.com or 609 651-7719, including names and number of attendees and contact phone numbers.
- Arrive at Hatch Auditorium by 5 p.m. and pay the tour fee of \$10 per person, either by check made out to BCWRT or cash.
- Wear sturdy walking shoes and appropriate clothing for this outdoor tour – you'll be traversing some uneven ground.
- The tour will conclude by 6:30 p.m., in time to attend the night's BCWRT meeting.



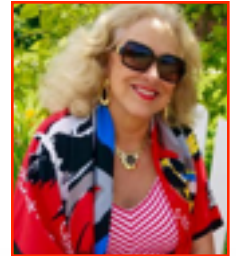
Date and Program Announced for Ladies' Forum

Charen Fink, BCWRT Advisor and author of this newsletter's Ladies' Department column, wants the BCWRT women to mark their calendars. The Civil War Ladies' Forum (for ladies only!) program is scheduled for Monday, October 31, 2022, from 6-8 p.m. at Murrow Hall in Trinity United Methodist Church on Nash Street in Southport.

Previous forums have attracted a packed house — of women only! — who are enlightened by Charen's tasty history-appropriate snacks, period settings, and outstanding presenters. The October

featured speaker is Ms. Betty Vaughn (shown), a recognized author and speaker, talking about Christmas traditions during the Civil War.

As always, BCWRT women attend at no charge, and the guest fee is still \$5, which has not changed since the inception of the Ladies' Forum some ten years ago! More information will be provided in newsletters later this year. (Ladies, have you marked your calendar yet?)



CWRT CONGRESS AWARD HONORS RUECKEL



As you read in last month's newsletter, BCWRT's co-founder Wally Rueckel was presented a plaque for helping found the Civil War Round Table Congress, a national organization which shares information and suggested tools for sustainability to round table leaders across the country.

Wally received another recognition from the CWRT Congress when they recently named a new award after him. "The Wally Rueckel Innovation Award will go to the round table that exhibits the greatest amount of creative ideas and effort for their organization," noted Mike Movius, the CWRT Congress President. "The award includes \$500, as well as recognition on the Congress website, social media channels, and Annual Report."

The Congress intends to present the initial Wally Rueckel Innovation Award at their 2022 conference at the Kenosha Civil War Museum, September 16-18, 2022, in Kenosha, Wis.

As stated in last month's newsletter which we are pleased to repeat, "The BCWRT extends hearty congratulations to Wally."

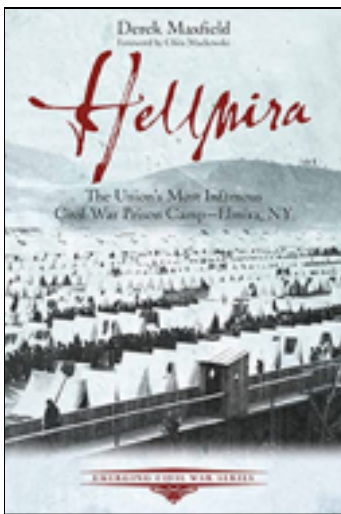
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Civil War Trivia: Five Confederate generals died in three days at Gettysburg. Six Confederate generals died or were mortally wounded in less than four hours at the Battle of Franklin. From *The History Buffs Guide to the Civil War*, by Thomas Flagel, Cumberland House, 2010.

Book Reviews - By E. Gifford Stack

Many of us tend to read books that connect with our interests, probably hoping to learn even more about our favorite subject matter. However, there is no guarantee that a book will necessarily satisfy us, nor make it a recommended reading. Two of my recent reads fall at either end of the “endorse spectrum.” *Hellmira, the Union’s Most Infamous Civil War Prison Camp - Elmira, NY*, by Derek Maxfield, is definitely worth reading if you are interested in Civil War POW camps. Unfortunately, *The Scourge of War - the Life of William Tecumseh Sherman*, by Brian Holden Reid, in my opinion fails as a satisfying read of one of the war’s most famous generals.

The story of Elmira’s prison camp, often referred to the “Andersonville of the North,” has received



attention in prior issues of BCWRT’s newsletter. A number of years ago, I visited Elmira and the cemetery where Confederate and Union soldiers are buried, sharing photos of the visit in the “Civil War Views” section of our newsletter. And a few

years later, I wrote a favorable book review of *Elmira, Death Camp of the North*, by Michael Horigan, published in 2002.

Maxfield’s book, released two years ago, elaborates on the human tragedies that befell the camp, which existed for only a year beginning in July 1864. He mentions the loss of 3,000

southern prisoners out of a population of 12,000 inmates, a death rate of 25 percent, making it the highest of all northern camps. The 160-page book gives many other details, and includes seven appendixes, ranging from driving tour suggestions to a comparison with Andersonville.

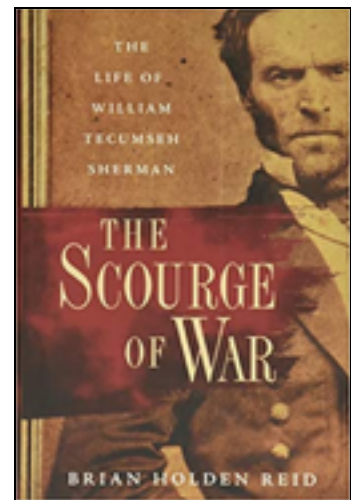
Reid’s book, all 600 pages, suffers from something not expected from the respected publisher, Oxford

University Press. It is full of grammatical errors and slipshod editing, exemplified by an *errata* page immediately upon opening the cover.

These mistakes and miscues throughout the book had me constantly wondering whether there were also factual errors, omissions, or misrepresentations.

The book does provide numerous interesting accounts of Sherman’s life, particularly during and after his Civil War experiences. The relationship with General Grant is one of the most enlightening parts of the book. Reid covers their discussions during battles, as well as a particularly fascinating description of Grant traveling to Sherman’s camp and correcting the latter’s terms of surrender to General Johnston, probably saving Sherman’s career.

There are purportedly 60,000 books written on the Civil War. Maxfield’s I recommend. Should you want to delve into General Sherman’s life, I suggest another than the one offered by author Reid.



Need a Civil War Book Suggestion?...Continued

You recall that last month BCWRT's President John Butler provided a (partial) list of Civil War books published in 2021, all of which were highly recommended by Internet sites and/or Civil War scholars. This month we complete the list of suggested readings.

A Worse Place Than Hell: How the Civil War Battle of Fredericksburg Changed a Nation by John Matteson, W.W. Norton & Company, Feb 9, 2021

Meade at Gettysburg: A Study in Command by Kent Masterson Brown, University of North Carolina Press, May 3, 2021

The Generals' Civil War: What Their Memoirs Can Teach Us Today by Stephen Cushman, University of North Carolina Press, Sep 28, 2021

Ends of War: The Unfinished Fight of Lee's Army After Appomattox by Caroline Janney, University of North Carolina Press, Sep 13, 2021

Stephen A. Swails: Black Freedom Fighter in the Civil War and Reconstruction by Gordon Rhea, Louisiana State University Press, Nov 3, 2021

A Thousand May Fall: Life, Death, and Survival in the Union Army by Brian Matthew Jordan, Liveright, Jan 26, 2021

A Holy Baptism of Fire and Blood: The Bible and the American Civil War by James P. Boyd, Oxford University Press, Jan 4, 2021

Robert E. Lee: A Life by Allen Guelzo, Knopf, Sep 28, 2021

The Bonds of War: A Story of Immigrants and Espirit de Corps in Company C, 96th Illinois Volunteer Infantry by Diana L. Dretske, Southern Illinois University Press, May 4, 2021

Matchless Organization: The Confederate Army Medical Department by Guy R. Hasegawa, Southern Illinois University Press, Jun 23, 2021

Emerging Civil War Series releases in 2021:

Embattled Capital: A Guide to Richmond During the Civil War by Robert M. Dunkerly and Doug Crenshaw, Savas Beatie, Jan 15, 2021

Unlike Anything That Ever Floated: The Monitor and Virginia and the Battle of Hampton Roads, March 8 – 9, 1862 by Dwight Sturtevant Hughes, Savas Beatie, Apr 6, 2021

A Mortal Blow to the Confederacy: The Fall of New Orleans, 1862 by Mark F. Bielski, Savas Beatie, Apr 8, 2021

Grant's Left Hook: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign, May 5 – June 7, 1864 by Sean Michael Chick, Savas Beatie, Jul 21, 2021

Passing Through the Fire: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain in the Civil War by Brian F. Swartz, Savas Beatie, Aug 10, 2021

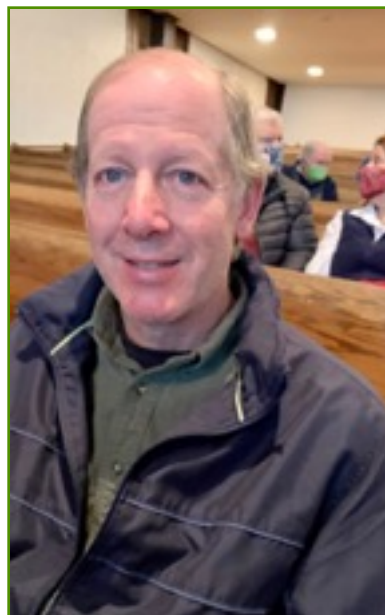
Lincoln Comes to Gettysburg by Bradley M. & Linda I. Gottfried, Savas Beatie, Aug 6, 2021

Pictured at our February Meeting

Speaker Wade Sokolosky and 216 attendees (including 18 new memberships and 7 guests!) were present for our February 1 meeting. Some of the happy attendees, including the winner of \$85 from the 50/50 drawing, paused for our camera. Another 98 members attended the meeting via Zoom! *(Photos by Chuck Roedema and E. Gifford Stack)*



Pictured at our February Meeting - Continued



MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The March BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, March 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.

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 brunswickcwr@gmail.com.

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

2022 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND ADVISORS

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Gar Dowell: VP & Director
Jim Kane: Secretary & Director
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Leslie Rivers: Advisor
Wally Rueckel: Advisor
Wade Sokolosky: Advisor
Peter Whelan: Advisor

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