



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER - JOHN BUTLER



Allow me to take a few minutes to cover a couple of quick notes for everyone.

Sound. I am just as concerned as you about the sound quality at Hatch Auditorium. I have spoken with them and they are working on fixing the issues prior to our November meeting. They will try and add some additional speakers in the front of the audience to enhance the sound quality there. They have fixed the speakers under the ceiling below the balcony, so that area has the best sound. It was perfect at the October presentation. So, if you have trouble hearing, the absolute best places to sit are in the balcony and in the back half of the main floor underneath the balcony. The Baptist Assembly is working on a new sound system for the auditorium beginning in 2023. I will continue to work with the A/V technicians to make sure we have good sound. Also of note, the Zoom calls and the YouTube videos have good sound quality.

Fort Anderson Tour. Chris Fonvielle, with a special guest appearance by Jim McKee, did an excellent job on the tour of Fort Anderson. We had over 40 attendees and they got to see parts of Fort Anderson not open to the public. They also heard the amazing story of the Confederate flag from the Battle of Fort Anderson in 1865. We are already working on a second tour of Fort Anderson in the first quarter of 2023. More details will follow. *If you want to see Chris Fonvielle again, he will*

be at the Southport Community Center at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 3, talking about "Curious Tales of Old Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear." It's free and no reservations are needed.

Elections. The BCWRT officers are up for election in December. We still need a member to fill one of our two Vice President slots. If interested see Wally Rueckel.

Membership. The BCWRT continues to grow. We now have 1,131 members! We attract more people to our monthly meetings (an average of 250 attendees) than most other Civil War round tables have total members. Plus, we average over 20 new members each month! So, keep telling your friends and neighbors about us.

Meetings. If you cannot physically come the monthly meeting, we always have the Zoom option for you. You do not have to register for the Zoom meeting. Just use the direct link provided in the monthly meeting announcement or the newsletter. That link changes each month so make sure you use the latest one. Lastly, if you can't make it to the meeting or use Zoom, we post the video on our YouTube channel. The video is posted two weeks after the meeting and you can access it on our website or go directly to YouTube and look up Brunswick Civil War Round Table.

Volunteers. The BCWRT is only as good as our volunteers. We are always looking for help. There are plenty of ways to participate. Come see me...and enhance your experience with the BCWRT.

John

CLASSIC BATTLE OF IRONCLADS RELIVED!

At our November 1 meeting we are in for a special treat. Dwight Hughes' presentation, "Unlike Anything That Ever Floated - The USS Monitor and the Battle of Hampton Roads," will take us into the heat of one of the most famous naval engagements in U.S. history.

On March 8, 1862, the Confederate ironclad CSS Virginia sailed into Hampton Roads to take on the wooden ships of the Union blockade, only to be met by the USS



Monitor, the Union Navy's ironclad. The USS Monitor was an ingenious but hurried response to both the imminent threat of the CSS Virginia (the scuttled Union steam frigate USS Merrimack), and to the growing prospect of international intervention backed by powerful British or French seagoing ironclads. The ensuing battle began within the Monitor's dim confines of the first rotating armored turret, the smoky depths of the gun decks, with shells screaming, clanging, booming, and splashing all around. Both vessels hammered away at each other with heavy cannon, trying to run down and hopefully disable the other, but their iron-armored sides prevented vital damage, ending the first battle between ironclads warships in a stalemate.



Dwight Hughes is a public historian, author, and frequent speaker at numerous Civil War round tables, historical conferences, and other venues. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy,

served 20 years as a Navy warfare officer, and received a Bronze Star for Meritorious Service and a Purple Heart while serving with river

forces in Vietnam. His second career was software engineering, primarily in electronic mapping for the U.S. Geological Survey where a ridge in Antarctica is named for him in recognition of contributions to Antarctic databases and information services.

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/85710590779?pwd=VGFWWFczRjAyRFVwM3VoTiszUVZSUT09>

Meeting ID - 857 1059 0779 **Passcode** - 797816

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 November's meeting! Starting Friday, October 21, and lasting until noon on Tuesday, November 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, November 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.

How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Letters

A review of Jack Davis' September Presentation By Jim Medeiros

So often in life we fall victim to dawdling, putting off until tomorrow what should be done today, procrastination, leaving unsaid too many things that demanded saying. And then there are couples like Gabriel Wharton and his wife, Annie Radford. They put time-wasters like me to shame. In three short years as newlyweds separated by exigencies of war, they wrote a landslide of love in their 524 letters. If only the Confederate generals knew how roasted they were by the fire of the couple's love. As Jack Davis explained at our September meeting, these two lovers did not let patriotism get in the way of their romance but their correspondence, lost to history until Davis helped exhume it in 2017, teaches us about the constancy of love and the reality of war even for generals.

Found in a family attic and overlooked for over a hundred years, the letters have become a book edited by Jack and his wife. They show Annie (Nannie in the letters) and Gabriel sharing the personal confidences associated with the most honest marriages. Gabe, surprisingly sentimental, can tantalize his absent bride with honeymoon memories of a particular hotel room number as if he remembers everywhere they have been. Several months after their marriage, Nannie could honestly confess that, "There was no charm in my maidenhood." (Spoken like a true impatient nineteen-year-old.) Yet, although these two lovers each obviously esteemed and honored the other, they both confessed that they had given up on ever finding a love that might last a lifetime.



Nonetheless, this is not just a tale of love in the growing ruins of war. It also offers a scathing commentary on politicians and their military minions.

Nannie and Gabe surely sound bound up together in their souls, but perhaps that made their patriotism conditional. No shrinking violet, Nannie held strong opinions on generals her husband admired including Robert E. Lee and General James Longstreet. She saved her greatest scorn for the Confederate President, always remarking on Davis's failure to list Gabriel on the periodic promotion list to general. Gabe himself had problems respecting superiors such as Jubal Early who committed the unpardonable sin of denying Gabe leave to go to his beloved Nannie for a few days. War had no place between the lovers and domestic bliss. In fact, they agreed that the loss of the Confederacy grew more likely with time and consoled themselves with plans to flee the country should the end come for the South.

Jack Davis gave us fine insight into the details of young marrieds at war, but other glimpses into daily opinions such as Gabe and Nannie's monitoring of their separated black slaves and how their relationship progressed whet the appetite for more than a glance at a few of the 524 (excluding telegrams) letters. This was one of the few times in my years spent writing speaker reviews that I left the meeting resolved to read the whole book of love.

TIME TO GROW UP

A Review of Sarah Bierle's October Presentation By Jim Medeiros

War gives the professional soldier a moment to shine, offering many opportunities to implement what was practiced, consuming soldiers and giving the professional more chances to lead. War also consumes officers, opening up precious ranks for junior officers to fill. War makes men out of boys. War tests men to their limits as peace cannot. And finally, war gives daddies the chance to see what sons are made of. All that was true for both Robert Beckham and Justin Dimick at Chancellorsville, but war showed few surprises in Beckham and the true man within the boy who had dogged Dimick through two expulsions from West Point and his final graduation.



A good student and sixth in his class, Beckham seemed marked for military success. Never expelled, receiving few demerits, and earning good grades, he reaped the benefits of his assiduous attitude with his choice of first duty in the Topographic Engineers, a valued avenue for advancement. Dimick, on the other hand, spent many hours on unauthorized visits sampling the local tavern. His casual attitude carried over to his classes where he was expelled for throwing his textbook at a classroom window just as the teacher walked in. Unlike Beckham, Dimick's saving grace was (after a manner of speaking) his good genes. Justin Dimick, Sr., a regular army officer, eventually commanded the 1st U.S. Artillery from its headquarters in Boston. Thanks to his father's intervention, Dimick recovered a place at West Point not once but twice (good genes never go away). Daddy's help did not, however, get his son's first assignment: the

infantry. Eventually, however, the general's influence found him a better path as adjutant for the 1st U.S. Artillery.

The Civil War gave both our artillerymen the opportunity to climb the ranks with Beckham

receiving a colonelship before the War killed him. Ironically, despite such radically different personal histories, both men distinguished themselves though not by killing each other at Chancellorsville. Beckham led a young

group of horse artillery into the heat of Chancellorsville, exploiting their mobility to follow-up on Jackson's attacking men and pop up again and again near the front to fire his guns from many positions. His aggression and elan drew Jackson's personal congratulations and plans for future promotions between JEB Stuart and General Robert E. Lee. Dimick for his part seems to have grown up since his days at The Point. He rallied his battery in the teeth of the Confederate attack and repeatedly stung the rebels. In spite of the many retreating infantry around them, the men of his battery persisted in the face of danger others readily fled. Eventually, Dimick was wounded several times and carried from the field before capture. For his dogged persistence in serving his guns, Dimick's own commanding officer cited his heroism as a model for others to emulate. In none of the correspondence discussing his heroism do the officers find it necessary to invoke his father's name. Both Dimick and Beckham had grown up, Dimick paying immediately with his blood and Beckham later after a few more years practice.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Charen Fink



This is usually the location for the Ladies' Department article penned by Charen Fink. Not this time. Charen, after writing her column almost since the round table first had a newsletter, quietly decided recently to rest on her well deserved laurels.

We all owe her our thanks for bringing to light the trials and tribulations of the women during the Civil War. She told us how they survived without their husbands, fathers, and brothers in those trying times. Her columns were well referenced, easily readable, and always had a "I didn't know that" tidbit or two.

She will still conduct the Ladies' Forum (see below) and may occasionally submit an article from the female perspective. Charen, all the best and thank you again for helping make our round table so outstanding.

Still Time to Register for Ladies' Forum

Ladies, you still have several days remaining to sign up for the October 31 Ladies' Forum sponsored by BCWRT and produced by Charen Fink. The guest speaker is Betty Vaughn (pictured) and she'll have an engaging PowerPoint presentation on the "Origins and Traditions of Christmas Celebrations in the mid-1800s." The forum, held at Trinity United Methodist Church on Nash Street in Southport, will open the doors at 5 p.m. and conclude at 8 p.m.

In addition to an enlightening presentation, the meeting features homemade period refreshments, door prizes, and Civil War music. There is no charge for BCWRT women and guests are only \$5.

Betty Vaughn is a prize winning visual artist with paintings in collections worldwide. She is also an award-winning author of four historical novels set in Eastern North Carolina, to include Kinston, New Bern, Fort Macon, and Fort Fisher during the period 1842-1868. She graduated from East Carolina University and also attended the University of South Carolina, Spalding University, and studied at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice, Italy. The Civil War-era is a period of particular interest for her having grown up hearing stories of her ancestors who fought and died in the war. For more information, contact Charen Fink at dcftandm@hotmail.com, or call (330) 507-2773.



NOTES FROM BOD MEETINGS

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. The next meeting is Tuesday, November 8.

Here are the main items of interest from the September and October meetings.

1. We need more volunteers to help with registration, the Sutler's Table, our website, and 50/50. John will make announcements at our meetings and E. Gifford will mention in the newsletter.
2. The Board voted unanimously to donate \$200 to the non-profit that is trying to save Wyse Forks Battlefield from NC Department of Transportation encroachment.
3. Our current balance as of October 11 is \$8,600.
4. John Walsh continues to organize excellent tours. He is working on something for 2023 that may involve out-of-state travel.
5. We continue to have serious issues with the sound system at Hatch. John will work with their staff to make improvements.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS IN DECEMBER

Our BCWRT by-laws require election of officers at the December meeting. The five positions are: president, two vice presidents, secretary, and treasurer. Nominations are now being accepted by Wally Rueckel, a past president who is heading up the 2023 nomination process. Wally stated members are encouraged to nominate themselves or someone they believe would be an asset to the BCWRT leadership team.

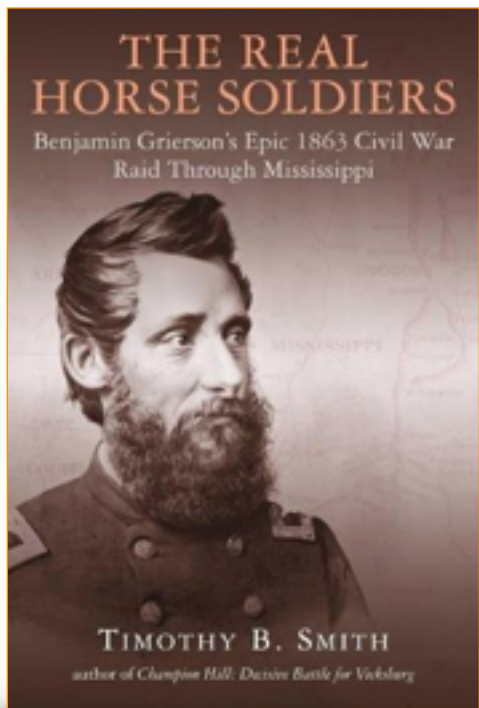
The current officers (who also serve on the Board of Directors) recently announced they are running for re-election: John Butler for president, Ann Birdsall for vice president, Jim Kane for secretary, and Tom Kehoe for treasurer. There is a current vacancy for the second vice president position.

Only BCWRT members may vote for officers at the December meeting. Wally also noted that positions on the Board of Directors other than officers are not elected. Rather, per the by-laws, at-large directors are appointed by the president with advice and consent of the Board.

If interested in running for an office, please contact Wally at wrueckel1969@gmail.com or 248-252-6844. For volunteering on the Board, contact John Butler at jlbutler2007@gmail.com or 404-229-9425.

The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid Through Mississippi

A Review of Timothy B. Smith's Book - **By John Butler**



Many Civil War buffs have heard of Colonel Grierson's raid through Mississippi in 1863. You either read the book by Dee Brown or might have even seen the movie **Horse Soldiers** with John Wayne and William Holden. It's a good John Wayne movie, just not very historically accurate, but who cares, it's John Wayne!

Tim Smith has done a very good job in researching the reason for the raid and the actual event. The raid was important to General Grant in order to distract Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton while the Union performed troop movements in preparation for Grant's final assault on Vicksburg. Noted one reviewer: "For 16 days (April 17 to May 2) Grierson led Confederate pursuers on a high-stakes chase through the entire state of Mississippi, entering the northern border with Tennessee and exiting its southern border with Louisiana. The daily rides were long, the rest stops short, and the tension high. Ironically, the man who

led the raid was a former music teacher who some say disliked horses. Throughout, he displayed outstanding leadership and cunning, destroyed railroad tracks, burned trestles and bridges, freed slaves, and created as much damage and chaos as possible."

Smith does a good job of weaving all of the moving parts together to tell the whole story of the raid. It's a compelling read, very enjoyable and highly recommended.

Prints and Statues Have to Go!

Looking for a Christmas gift or something you've always wanted to put on your "everything" table/sideboard/wall? You're in luck. At our November meeting (and December if necessary), Skip Maxwell, our donations manager, wants to sell all remaining gifted prints and statues (7-10" tall, weighing 1 - 3.5#). Make an offer and they are yours!



FORT ANDERSON TOUR A SUCCESS

Over 40 members and guests spent a thoroughly educational Saturday in early October touring Fort Anderson with Chris Fonvielle, recognized as the leading expert on all things Civil War in North Carolina. Due to the high demand and a large waitlist, another tour of the fort is planned sometime in early 2023. *(Photos by John Walsh and Pat de Barros)*



CIVIL WAR VIEWS - Part 1



Member Skip Maxwell was in South Carolina a few months back and visited the Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage (30 miles north of Savannah) where he learned of the Battle of Honey Hill, one of lesser known, but still interesting conflicts of the war. Efforts are on-going to make the site more accessible to the public. The battle was part of Sherman's March to the Sea, but was conducted by Union Brig. General John Hatch. The Confederates won the day.

CIVIL WAR VIEWS - Part 2

In September Jim Medeiros and his son Geoffrey took in the off-the-beaten-path Melrose Caverns, near Harrisonburg, Virginia. In 1862 Union General Nathaniel Banks quartered 150 of his troops in the caverns along with munitions. Crawling on their bellies for fifty feet, the men made short work of stalactites and stalagmites blocking their way by using them for target practice. Although some of the soldiers used charcoal to smear their units and names on the wall, a few more enterprising enlisted men carved their messages into the rock as well as a Union shield. The 15 torch holes carefully drilled into the galleries still gape today along with the scorch marks from the flames on the walls above them. *(Photos by Geoffrey Medeiros)*



CIVIL WAR VIEWS - Part 3

Member E. Gifford Stack went to his 60th high school reunion in Rock Island, Ill., in early October. While there he once again spent time visiting the Rock Island Confederate Cemetery (shared in the September 2015 newsletter) located on the Rock Island Arsenal in the middle of the Mississippi River between Illinois and Iowa. Ironically, while growing up in Rock Island he never knew the Arsenal was home to one a notorious Confederate POW camps. The National Park Service website describes it thusly: “The deplorable conditions at the camp led some to call it the ‘Andersonville

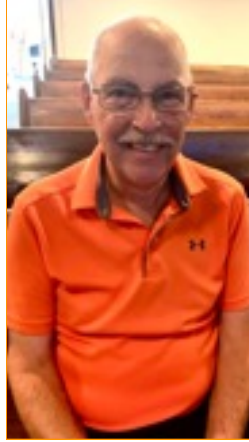
of the North,’ a reference to the infamous prison in Georgia. Disease, including smallpox and pneumonia, ran rampant through the prison claiming many lives, while others died from exposure to the elements and the unsanitary conditions of the camp. During the first four months alone, more than 950 Confederate soldiers died.”

From it’s opening in December 1963 until it closed in July 1865, some 12,000 prisoners passed through its gates. Almost 2,000 died there. Nothing remains of the camp, with the cemetery the only reminder of the war’s impact at the Arsenal. *(Photos by E. Gifford Stack)*

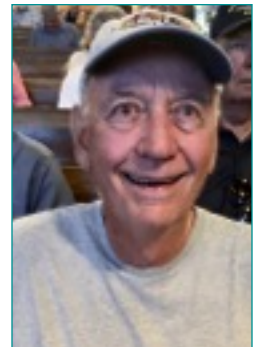
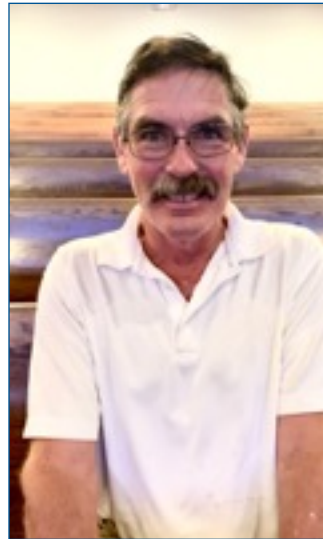


Pictured at our September and October Meetings

Speakers Jack Davis and Sarah Bierle entertained 256 and 219 members respectively at our September and October meetings where we welcomed 46 new members! Some of the happy attendees, including our 50/50 winners, paused for our camera. Over 80 other members attended the two meetings via Zoom! *(Photos by E. Gifford Stack)*



Pictured at our September and October Meetings - Cont.



MUSTER NOTES and NOTABLES

The November BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, November 1, 2022.
The meeting will be held at Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC. 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.
Our website address is: <https://brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com>
Contact us at: brunswickcwrt@gmail.com.

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

2022 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
Peter Whelan: Advisor

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E. Gifford Stack (egstack44@gmail.com)

