



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

The President's Corner by John Butler



If you were one of the almost 400 people who got to hear Chris Fonvielle talk about the Civil War battles to take Wilmington, you enjoyed a rare treat. Chris was in his usually great form and gave a wonderful presentation. If you missed the program, you can find it [here](#) on our [YouTube Channel](#) on our website. It is one of over 40 recorded programs we have available for you to watch at your leisure.

Fort Fisher will have its grand opening on October 29, so it should be open to the public on November 1 at the latest. It's been more than a year and millions of dollars in the construction and will definitely be worth your visit.

Bentonville and New Bern Civil War sites are open and ready for business. It would be a nice one-day trip. Make sure you take your North Carolina Civil War Trails Map with you.

Due to storm damage at United Methodist Church in Southport, our Ladies' Forum has been rescheduled to March 10, 2025. More details will follow.

The Fort Fisher evening tour with Chris Fonvielle has been rescheduled for January 15, 2025. This is on the same date 160 years after the final attack on the fort. More details will follow for this also.

I would like to congratulate the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table who just celebrated their 30th anniversary. I wish them continued success.

See you at the November meeting!

John

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BCWRT Upcoming Events

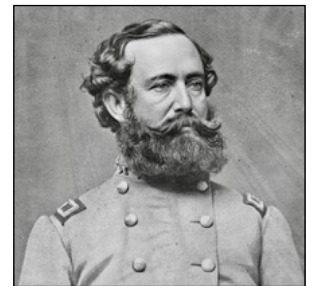
Tuesday, November 5, 2024 Program

“The Beefsteak Raid at Petersburg”



The incredible story of The Beefsteak Raid, also known as the Cattle Raid, was part of the Siege of Petersburg in September, 1864, when 3,000 Confederate troops trekked 100 miles to attack 3,000 head of cattle. Why? The plan was to acquire cattle that were intended for consumption by the Union Army, which was laying a combined siege to the cities of Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia.

The Confederate forces defending the capital of Richmond were beginning to run out of food. A ray of hope came when a scout reported that 3,000 lightly defended cattle behind Union lines seemed to be a possible short term solution. It was estimated that only 120 Union soldiers and 30 civilians stood guard. In response, Confederate Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton assembled 3,000 troops to follow him. The raid was on.



President Lincoln called the raid “the slickest piece of cattle-stealing” he ever heard of.



Will Greene is a well-known Civil War historian. He was director of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites and later became director of Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier in Petersburg, Virginia. He was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the national oversight board for the Institute of Museum and Library Services that oversees the federal agency which advises and supports museums and libraries throughout the United States. Over the years, he has written a number of books along with over 20 journal articles on Civil War subjects. In addition, he has been invited to lecture and participate in panel discussion on the C-SPAN television network on ten different occasions on various Civil War topics.

You are encouraged to attend the meeting either in person or via Zoom.

If participating via Zoom, simply use the following link:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89458504422?pwd=wySi6KoaccAzWoiSAE24YbYdbZZhD7.1>

Meeting ID: 865 1368 1512

Passcode: 042328

Fort Fisher Tour



Mother Nature had her own ideas about the the long-awaited opening of the new Fort Fisher museum and earthworks which had been scheduled for September 27. The picture of the flooded parking lot gives some indication of the extensive damage that was incurred. The grand opening will now be held on October 29.



Naturally our Fort Fisher Tour has also been rescheduled and will be held on January 15, 2025. This date happens to be the anniversary date of the battle in 1865 which should add to the affair along with having Chris Fonvielle lead the tour for an outstanding experience.

There is even talk of making this an annual event. In the meantime, mark your calendars. Details will be announced soon.

Bentonville Tour

A BCWRT tour of Bentonville is being planned for the spring of 2025. The date and details are being worked on and will be announced as soon as finalized. As the battlefield is expansive, it is anticipated that transportation will be provided for attendees for visiting the various tour sites.



Bentonville 160th Anniversary

To purchase tickets for this exciting event or for more information, visit bentonvillereenactment.com.

Ticket Prices:

Single Day \$15

Weekend Pass: \$25

Children 10 and under are free.

Guest Quarters for the General



The Brunswick Civil War Round Table is offering a unique opportunity to our members. Kurt Fields, an exceptional U. S. Grant impersonator, will provide the December 2, 2024 program.

He asked if one of our members would be able to host him and his wife on Dec. 2 - Dec 4. They will be driving from Memphis, will arrive on Dec. 2 and have dinner that evening with the BCWRT Board. He will provide the program on Dec. 3, and then he and his wife will depart on Dec. 4.

If you are interested, please send an email to our Vice President of Programs, Ann Birdsall, at ann_birdsall1950@yahoo.com with your phone number. She will contact you to provide further information and answer any questions.

Civil War Notes

To take advantage of the wide variety of fish and seafood provided by the rivers and harbors, ships had designated cooks and stationary kitchens, modest though they were, that allowed for a better and more uniform grade of cookery.

Civil War seamen had a better diet than their army counterparts. Stationed at ports or along coastlines, they had easier access to fresh seafood and any imported goods they could acquire.

Fish Chowder

Ingredients:

2 Tbsps oil
1 onion, chopped
Piece of salt pork
2 large fish (cod or catfish)

1/2 pound potatoes,
coarsely chopped
Salt and pepper
Piece of butter size of an
egg (4 Tbsps)
1/2 cup flour
1 cup milk

Instructions:

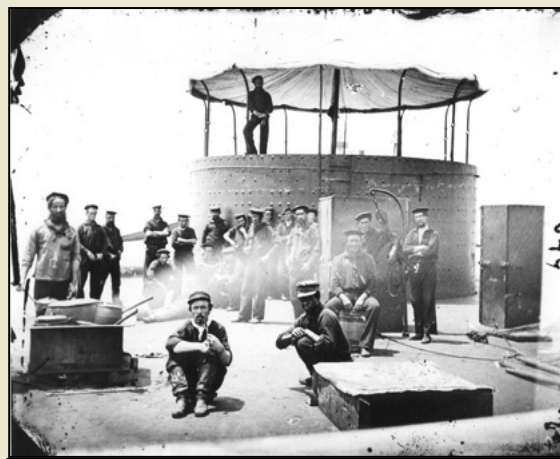
Heat the oil and sauté the onion and salt pork; set aside.

Clean the fish, cut into cubes and place in a pan with the potatoes and seasoning. Cover with water and simmer for about 15 minutes.

In a separate pan, slowly melt the butter, add the flour and cook for about a minute, remove from the heat and whip in the milk.

Add the onion, salt pork, and white sauce to the fish and potatoes. Adjust seasoning, simmer for a few minutes and serve.

Serves 4



Sailors cooking on the deck of the ironclad USS

Commentary and recipe from [The Civil War Cookbook](#) by William C. Davis shared by Robbin Smith

The following is an excerpt from an article by Elizabeth Hoxie Joyner and can be found [here](#) on the U.S. Naval Institute website, [usni.org](#). It describes how Civil War sailors lived based on the artifacts found on the ironclad **USS Cairo** when it was raised in 1964. This was the ship which Ed Bearss and two companions were instrumental in raising and preserving.

How Civil War Sailors Lived

The **USS Cairo** was raised from the muddy bottom of the Yazoo River in 1964. More than a century earlier, on 12 December 1862, the ship had sunk only 12 minutes after Confederates ashore electrically detonated two torpedoes alongside her.

Although the Cairo's war record was disappointing for the Union, what she took with her when she went down has proved a boon to historians. Because she sank so quickly, crewmen were unable to save most of their belongings. The personal artifacts subsequently recovered provide glimpses into the everyday life of the Civil War Sailor.

Meals on board the ironclad were usually served three times a day. The enlisted men were divided into and ate by messes of about 13 men, and each mess was assigned a wooden chest in which to store its tin plates and cups and spoons. Each sailor, however, was responsible for his own eating gear, so those who could

write would inscribe their names or initials on their items and the illiterate men marked theirs with particular symbols to indicate ownership.

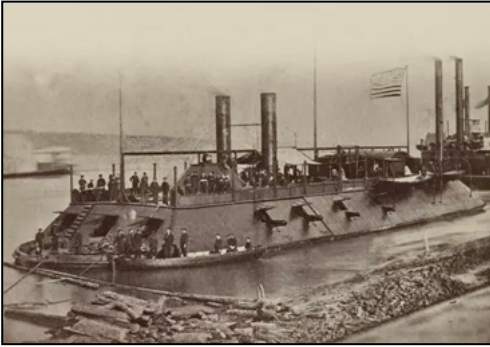
The large number of pepper sauce and mustard bottles retrieved from the Cairo indicates that the sailors' meals, which consisted mainly of salted beef or pork and beans, needed some spicing up. Bottles of Lea & Perrin's Worcestershire Sauce, still a popular condiment, were also discovered on board the Ironclad.

While the enlisted men ate their meals wherever they could find a place to sit or stand, the Cairo's 17 officers dined in a separate mess area and ate off fine white ironstone china, much of it manufactured by J. Wedgwood. Their meals were accompanied by wine and champagne as well as soft drinks manufactured by J. H. Kump of Memphis, Tennessee. Bottles of each were found in the Cairo during her recovery.

BCWRT - Looking Back

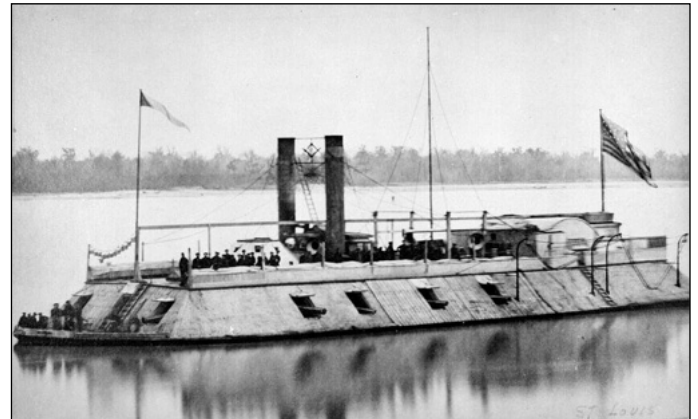
The January 2017 edition of *Call to Arms* included a page about the upcoming program for January 4, 2017, which was to be presented by Ed Bearss. The program announcement, in part, follows:

Ed Bearss and Raising the Ironclad *USS Cairo*



On December 12, 1862, naval history was made when the Union ironclad *USS Cairo* was sunk in the Yazoo river in Mississippi in 36 feet of water by an electronically-detonated underwater mine, then known as a “torpedo.” She went down in twelve minutes, and was the first vessel that ever sank in this manner. The vessel was involved in the campaign against Vicksburg, with a goal of taking control of the Yahoo river. After the Confederates sank the *Cairo* she laid largely forgotten for the 98 years until a group led by then Vicksburg National Military Park Chief Historian Ed Bearss discovered the hulk resting on the bottom of the Yazoo, north of Vicksburg. The discovery was clearly a defining moment for him in his illustrious career as Civil War historian.

After three years of working the site on his own time, accompanied by two companions, Don Jacks and Walter Graham, and using only a compass and iron bar probes, they discovered the *Cairo*. Local interest grew when they were able to identify the conning tower and a gun. This set the wheels in motion to help finance the salvage. When finally raised, the vessel and her contents served as a virtual “time capsule” of life and service in the Civil War-era U.S. Navy.



USS Cairo (Library of Congress photos)



USS Cairo
(NPS photos)

Today the *Cairo* is displayed inside the Vicksburg National Battlefield Park, where she rests outside the National Cemetery beside a specially-built museum, including hundreds of artifacts discovered in the muck and silt which filled the vessel when she was raised.

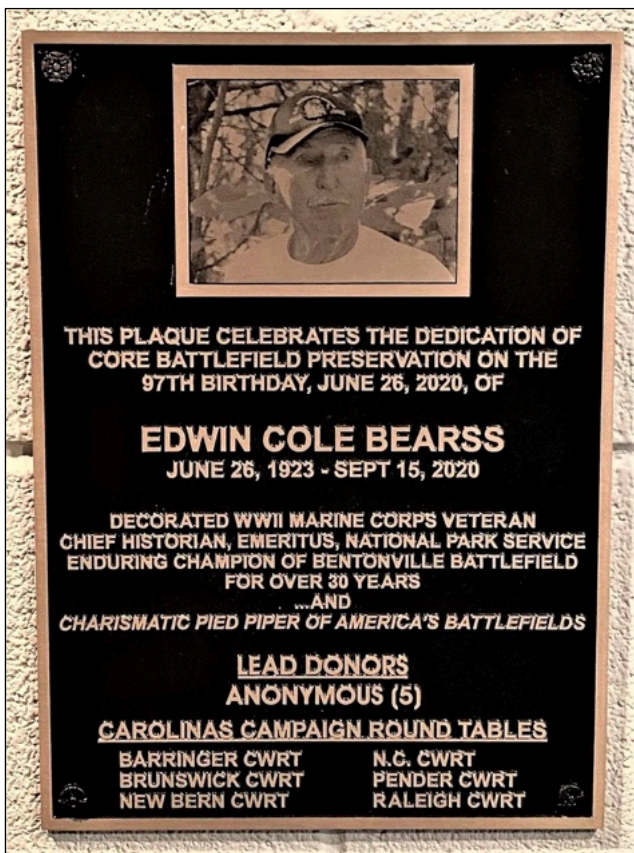


BCWRT - Looking Back

Ed Bearss

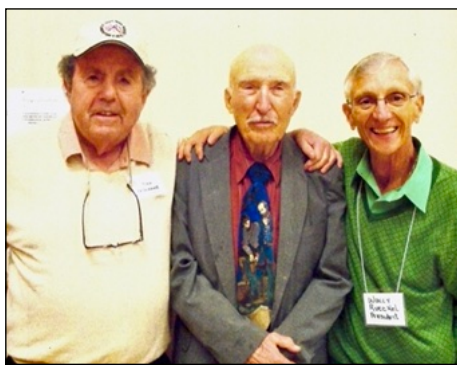
Ed Bearss began his history career working for the National Park Service in 1955 in Vicksburg, MS. He was the chief historian for the NPS 1981-1994 and in 1991 became the NPS chief historian of military sites.

After his retirement in 1995, the NPS awarded him the title of National Park Service Historian Emeritus. Also after his retirement he led battlefield tours for the Smithsonian Institution, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Civil War Roundtables - including our own BCWRT. The memorial plaque shown below was donated by North Carolina Civil War roundtables, including BCWRT, at Bentonville Battlefield which was done in appreciation and celebration of Ed Bearss and his work in battlefield preservation.



*The January 2017 edition of **Call to Arms** . . .*

"As our special first guest speaker of the New Year, Ed is no stranger, returning to us for a record seventh visit. With his booming voice and encyclopedic knowledge of military history, he has been called a "living national treasure" by the Smithsonian, and received virtually every award in the field of historical study."



Ed Bearss with Tom O'Donnell and Wally Rueckel, founders of the BCWRT

Ed Bearss was a proud Marine and veteran of World War II. He was deployed to the South Pacific in 1942 and severely wounded in January 1944 with injuries that caused him to be hospitalized for more than two years. He went on to college and graduate school before beginning his life as a historian.

Ed died on September 15, 2020 at the age of 97 and many memorials were given by those he touched through the years, from people who became admirers and friends such as [Mark K. Christ](#) and fellow Trustee [Bill Vodra](#), [The American Battlefield Trust](#), [The Smithsonian Magazine](#), [The National WWII Museum](#).

As one of the powerful voices in the Ken Burns documentary, *The Civil War*, he brought history alive for millions of Americans with his deep voice and evocative descriptions.

Ladies' Forum



The Ladies' Forum

The tropical storm in September has caused us to reschedule our October Forum. The church where we hold the Forum is in need of repairs and we have also been left with the challenges of driving into and out of Southport.

The Ladies' Forum has been scheduled for:

Monday, March 10, 2025

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Murrow Hall at Trinity United Methodist Church
Nash St., Southport

We are pleased that we will be able to have the same speakers and program as planned -

Liz Fuller of the Southport Historical Society will portray Mrs. Mary Duffy, Southport tavern owner in the 1800s, and Carolee Morris will bring us humor from Mark Twain.



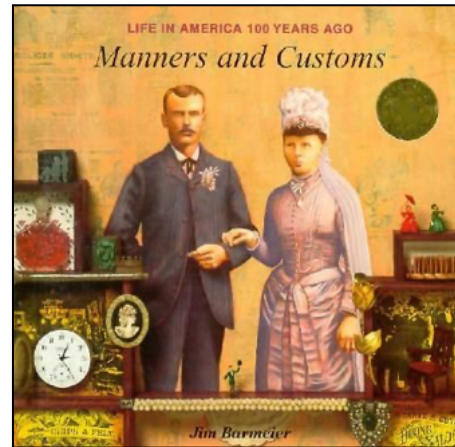
Sally Louisa Tompkins

The Southern celebration of the feminine ideal had a decidedly negative effect. When it came time to mobilize a nursing corps, the turnout was alarmingly low, and most Confederate hospital orderlies throughout the war were slaves. Among the exceptions was Sally Louisa Tompkins. A Richmond philanthropist, she converted a judge's home in the Confederate capital into a hospital where she and six assistants took in the wounded of First Manassas.

Jefferson Davis gave her the rank of captain. She refused the pay but used the rank to procure rations and supplies.

From The History Buff's Guide to the Civil War by Thomas R. Flagel

Life in America 100 Years Ago



Courtship and Marriage

The middle-class family was governed by a strict set of rules and roles. Social rank was set by tradition. The man was superior to the woman and was given more opportunities. He could vote, enter politics, and go out into the world to work – if he was of the right social class. The male lived under a masculine code of behavior that expected him to conquer the world and acquire wealth.

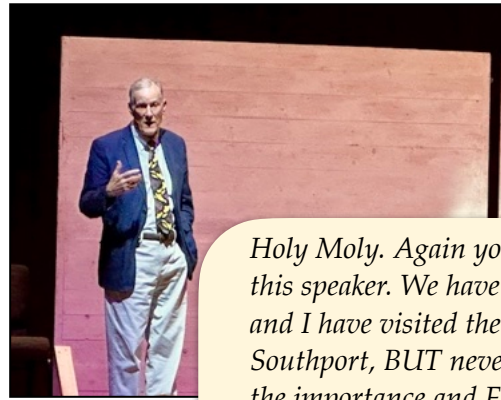
The woman, however, was obligated by tradition to raise a family and maintain a household. Not only was she not required to earn a living, but such an act would have actually interfered with her primary duties as a wife and mother. Women could neither vote nor have the same privileges of ownership. They could not move about as freely as men. Moreover, where men could be indiscreet, women were required to live within a complex ideal of feminine purity.

By the end of the 19th century, however, these traditional roles and rules began to break down as women were given more opportunities in the workplace.

From Manners and Customs, Life in America 100 Years Ago by James Barmeier. First published July 1996. Contributed by Robbin Smith

Meeting Photo Gallery

We had a another great meeting in October with Chris Fonvielle presenting “Closing Down the Kingdom: The Wilmington Campaign.”



Holy Moly. Again you hit a home run with this speaker. We have lived here since 2006 and I have visited the maritime museum in Southport, BUT never knew the details of the importance and FALL of Ft. Fisher, Ft Anderson and Wilmington. Soooo interesting!!! Would love to audit one of his classes.

Thank you for bringing him to this group.

Kendra Maxwell



Did you know that each presentation at our meetings is recorded? A week later it is uploaded to our YouTube site and available for anyone to view.

If you were not able to attend our last meeting and missed Chris Fonvielle's great presentation you can watch it on YouTube. You can click on the icon to watch it or any of the others from the past few years.



Board Notes & Local Events

Notes from the October 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

1. Our balance as of the end of May is \$7,223.
2. We had approximately 360 people attend the meeting, of which 20 were new members and another 42 watched the meeting via Zoom.
3. Training of new volunteers and cross training of current ones was discussed and is planned for the near future.
4. There are no changes in the speaker schedule for the rest of the season. Chris Fonvielle did an excellent presentation filling in for the original speaker who was not able to attend due to health issues.
5. The Ladies' Forum has been rescheduled to March 10, 2025.
6. The tour of Fort Fisher has been rescheduled to Jan 15. It was suggested to have this be an annual tour.

Our next Board meeting is Tuesday, November 12, 2024. Meetings are held 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 that includes interested Advisors and members. The meetings are held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Southport one week following our gathering at Hatch and begin at 10:00 am. If you wish to attend or have suggestions for the Board, please contact John at jlbutler2007@gmail.com.

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

"The Battle of Mobile Bay"

John V. Quarstein will speak about the legendary and furious battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864, pitting famous U.S. Navy Admiral David Farragut against Confederate State Navy Admiral Franklin Buchanan.

Learn about the life and times of Franklin Buchanan - first superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis and commander of ships in Commodore Perry's missions to Japan - from the momentous battle of Hampton Roads between the USS Monitor and the CSS Virginia, to the desperate, close-quarters naval combat in Mobile Bay, Alabama, in 1864. It's a tale of great courage, drama and legendary leadership.

John Quarstein is the Director Emeritus of the USS Monitor Center at the Mariners' Museum and retired director of the Virginia War Museum in Newport News, VA.

November 14, 2024, 7:00 pm

St John's Episcopal Church
1219 Forest Hills Dr., Wilmington

Southport Historical Society Programs

Southport Suzie's Monday Speaker

Monday, November 25, 6:00 pm

Southport Suzie's (in Big Lots shopping plaza)

Come join us for our Speaker Series, have a drink or snack and enjoy learning Southport History. No reservations required.

Second Tuesday Talk

Tuesday, November 12, 10:00 am, Harper Library

Donna Rowntree, the curator of the Society's exhibits at Fort Johnston, shares the rich history, heritage, and culture of Southport. Exhibits include a tribute to our veterans, the NC 4th of July Festival, a portrayal of life in the Garrison, stories of blockade runners, African American education, the women of early 29th century Southport, novelist Robert C Ruark, and artist Art Newton.

Open to the Public. Reservations are suggested. Call 910-457-6237

"Fort Fisher Illustrated: Art of the Battle"

Thursday, November 7, 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Southport Community Center
223 E. Bay St.

Dr. Chris Fonvielle will be presenting his new book, "Fort Fisher Illustrated: Art of the Battle." Books will be available for purchase and signing. Special Door Prize: 2 tickets to the 2024 Holiday Home Tour.

The program is free and open to the public.
No reservations required.



Muster Notes and Notables

**The November BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, November 5, 2024.
Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC.
See page 2 for details to attend via Zoom.**

Registration begins at 6:15 pm and the meeting starts promptly at 7:00 pm.

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

2024-2025 Officers, Directors, and Advisors

John Butler: President & Director
Ann Birdsall: VP & Director
Jim Dunn: VP & Director
Jennifer Chapman: Secretary & Director
Tom Kehoe: Treasurer & Director
Bruce Jordan: Director
Chuck Roedema: Director
Gar Dowell: Advisor
Charen Fink: Advisor

Chris Fonvielle: Advisor
Jim McKee: Advisor
Chris Mackowski: Advisor
Skip Maxwell: Advisor
Roy Pender: Advisor
Wally Rueckel: Advisor
Wade Sokolosky: Advisor
Robbin Smith: Advisor
John Wall: Advisor
Angela Zombek: Advisor

Connect with us



We Welcome Your Suggestions for our Speakers, Website, Meeting Procedures, Membership Retention, etc.

BCWRT is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization,
co-founded by Tom O'Donnell and Wally Rueckel and organized in May 2010.

Call to Arms Editor: Jennifer Chapman (jennifer.chapman3@icloud.com)