



Call to Arms

Brunswick Civil War Round Table Newsletter

The President's Corner by John Butler



We had a great start to our 15th Season with Chris Mackowski and his presentation on Spotsylvania. Twenty-six new members signed up at the meeting. That's a new record for us!

The new Fort Fisher Museum will open to the public on Friday, September 27. Did you know that the fort is the most popular historical site in New Hanover County and the second busiest state park.

Eric Wittenberg was scheduled to speak at our October meeting, but he has had to cancel due to some serious medical issues. He wanted to come, but his wife stepped in and said no. The caregiver always has the last word. Ann will reschedule him as soon as he is able and we hope that he is soon back to good health. We were able to get Chris Fonvielle to speak at the October meeting. So get ready to hold on to your seats. He always does a great job.

Reminder: The Ladies' Forum will be on October 14th at the Trinity United Methodist Church. Robbin Smith has put together a good program. Sorry guys, this is for women only. Women sign up by sending an email or at the October meeting. Its free to all BCWRT women members and \$5 for nonmembers. See page 4 for information.

If you have not gotten a chance to look at our annual member survey, [click here](#) to view it. We did not have any surprises, but lots of good suggestions. Thank you to the 288 members who responded out of a possible 600. That is a great response rate. The survey indicated members like our speakers, the updates to Hatch Auditorium and the Newsletter. Most members do not access the website, our Facebook page or online registration. You also gave us several ideas for speaker topics and will use them for our 2025-2026 Speaker Season.

When you get a chance, try our online registration system and Website and Facebook page. I want to thank everyone who participated.

See you at the October meeting!

John

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BCWRT Upcoming Events

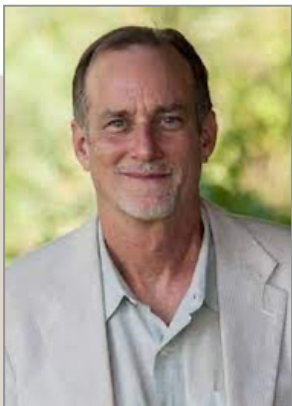
Tuesday, October 1, 2024 Program

“Closing Down the Kingdom: The Wilmington Campaign”

This month we will learn 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. Chris is rated by members as a top-notch storyteller, as well as being one of our most popular speakers.

He 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. He will then examine why the Federals were so interested in taking, not just Fort Fisher, but Wilmington in the winter of 1865.



Our guest speaker Chris Fonvielle, professor emeritus in the Dept. of History at UNCW, and a long-time Advisor to the BCWRT, is a native of Wilmington with a life-long interest in the American Civil War, North Carolina, and Cape Fear history. His in-depth research focuses on coastal operations and defenses, and blockade running in southeastern North Carolina during the Civil War. He has written and published 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 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: 894 5850 4422

Passcode: 160264

BCWRT Tours & News

Fort Fisher Tour

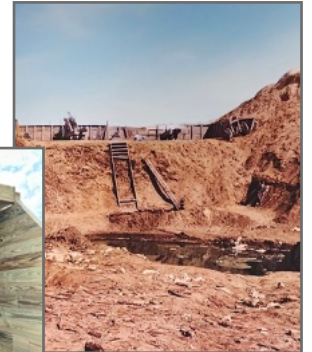


After a long wait and with much anticipation, the new Fort Fisher museum, visitor center and reconstructed earthworks will open on Friday, September 27, 2024.

BCWRT is pleased to announce that we made arrangements and scheduled a tour of Fort Fisher on Friday, November 15, 2024. John Walsh advises that the tour will be conducted by Dr. Chris Fonvielle. It will begin in the new Visitor Center and then continue outdoors to view the earthworks at dusk and into the evening as the actual battle

did. Flashlights will be recommended, but there will be a full moon on that night which will certainly enhance the experience.

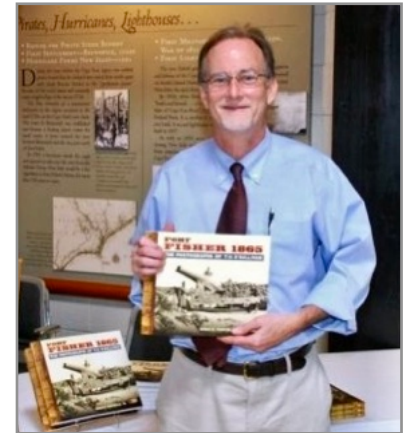
Mark your calendars for November 15! Details and full information to sign up for what will be a memorable experience will be provided soon.



New Book About Fort Fisher

Chris Fonvielle has written a new book with co-author Dr. Bob Browning, about Fort Fisher titled **Fort Fisher Illustrated: Art of the Battle**. Chris said that together they “examined every known piece of nineteenth century art - lithographs, paintings, woodcut and copper plate engravings, drawings, and sketches - to try and understand how Americans came to understand the great importance of Fort Fisher. It’s going to be a beautiful book.”

The book will be coming out in October. Check out his website, chrisfonvielle.com, for more information.



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.



The Ladies' Forum

Monday, October 14, 2024

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Murrow Hall at Trinity United Methodist Church

Nash St., Southport

Liz Fuller Presents

Mrs. Mary Duffy



We invite you to meet Mrs. Mary Duffy, a tavern owner in Smithville during the 1800s. Mary is a widow whose only grandson fought for the Confederacy. She has a wealth of stories about life in Smithville (Southport's original name until 1887) during the War of Southern Independence. During those difficult years, she and her friends experienced numerous hardships. Mary is looking forward to telling you tales of the spirit, resolve, and determination of Smithville's women.

Liz Fuller is the President of the Southport Historical Society where she speaks on a wide range of topics relating to Southport's history. She is the author of the recently published book, Southport's Secret Suffragist: The Story of Anna Alene Clemons.

We are also pleased that our October Ladies' Forum will feature **Carolee Morris** whose long interest in history has included graduate studies as well as oratorical and speaking contests. Carolee will be reading a selection from Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer. The selected story, its time frame, subject matter, and Twain's inimitable humor jibe with Liz Fuller's well-chosen topic.

The Ladies' Forum is for women only and is a free event each year for members of BCWRT. Guests are always welcome and pay only \$5. Light refreshments are served.

Reservations are strongly recommended.

Please contact BCWRT at brunswickcwr@gmail.com to sign up.

There will also be a sign-up table near the stage with Robbin Smith before our next meeting.



Civil War Notes

Bean Soup Recipe

Beans, which were easy to store and transport, were an important source of protein during the war and sustained many a hungry soldier deprived of fresh meat and dairy products. The beans were part of camp rations because of the cooking time needed and combined when available with a ration of fresh or salted pork.

Ingredients:

1/2 pound uncooked navy beans
3/4 pound ham shank
1 cup diced potatoes (uncooked)
3/4 cup diced onions
3 large tomatoes, skinned and finely chopped
salt and pepper
1 Tbsp parsley

Instructions:

Cover the beans with cold water and soak overnight. Rinse the beans, cover with fresh water, cook until tender and then strain.

Cover the ham with cold water and simmer until tender, skimming off the fat.

Add the beans, potatoes, and onion to the ham and simmer gently.

When the vegetables are almost tender, add the tomatoes, salt and pepper and parsley, and cook slowly until the vegetables are ready.

The soup can be served immediately but tastes better reheated on the following day. Serves 6.



Recipe from The Civil War Cookbook by William C. Davis shared by Robbin Smith

Civil War Music

Both sides ate lots of beans during the Civil War and thereafter. They even sang songs about beans. One song sung by the soldiers during the Civil War was "The Army Bean". The words were written by Anonymous or unknown and the tune was to "Sweet Bye and Bye". *Listen to a rendition here* <https://youtu.be/UZeuA6BbMSU>

*"There's a spot that the soldiers all love,
The mess tent's the place that we mean,
And the dish we like best to see there
Is the old-fashioned white army bean.*

*'Tis the bean that we mean,
And we'll eat as ne'er ate before,
The army bean, nice and clean,
We'll stick to our beans evermore.*

*Now the bean in its primitive state
Is a plant we have all often met,
And when cooked in the old army style
It has charms we can never forget.*

*'Tis the bean that we mean,
And we'll eat as we ne'er ate before,
The army bean, nice and clean,
We'll stick to our bean evermore.*

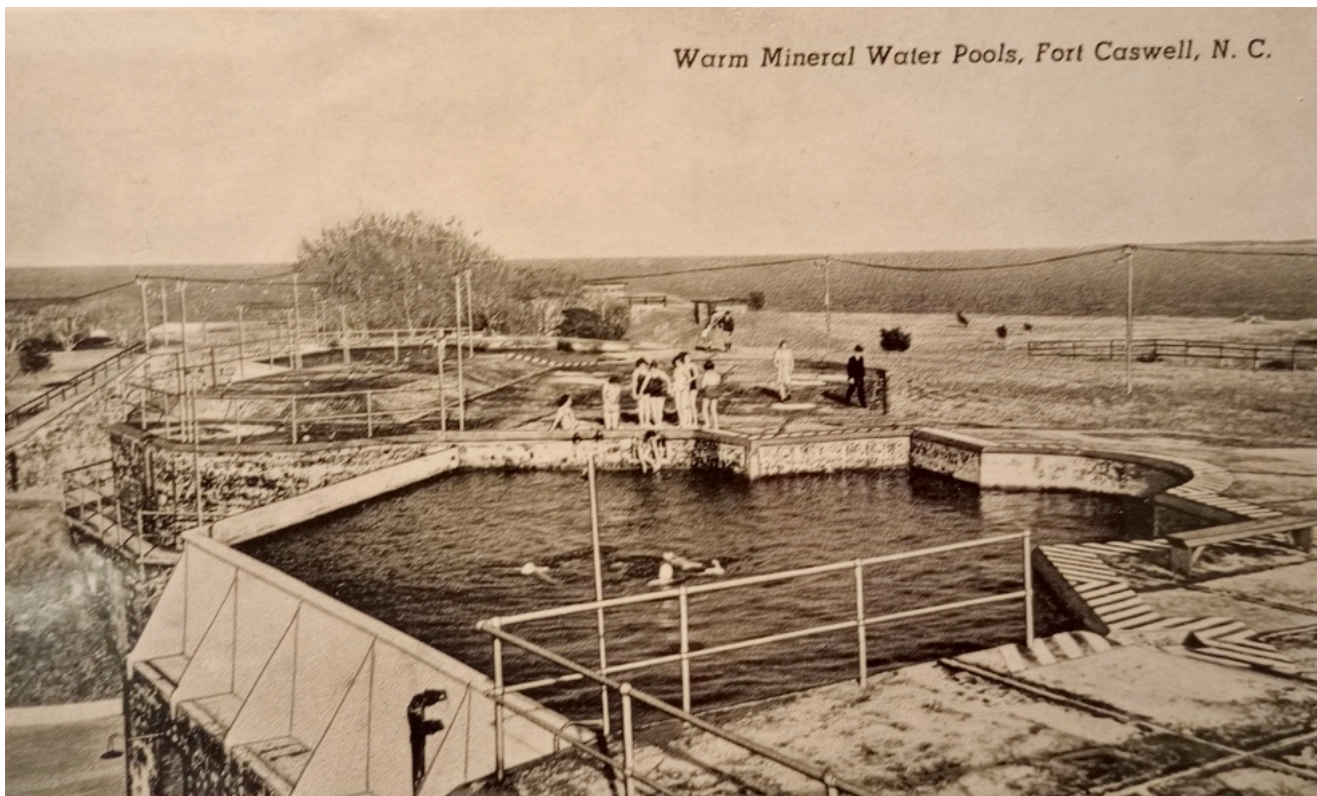
*The German is fond of sauerkraut,
The potato is loved by the Mick,
But the soldiers have long since found out
That through life to our beans we will stick.*

*'Tis the bean that we mean,
And we'll eat as we ne've ate before,
The army bean, nice and clean,
We'll stick to our beans evermore."*

Song from "Singing Soldiers: A History of the Civil War in Song". by Paul Glass and Louis C. Singer, Da Capo Press, Inc., New York, N.Y. 1964.

Local History

The Resort at Fort Caswell



BCWRT member, Dick Slease, provided this postcard picture of a swimming pool atop Battery Caswell. Private investors purchased the site in 1937 and attempted to turn Fort Caswell into a resort. Artesian wells which produced hot mineral water and cisterns on the property that collected rainwater were used to fill the pools. The resort was not successful and in 1941 the Navy purchased Fort Caswell.

Civil War Round Table Congress Awards



The mission of the CWRT Congress is to inspire Civil War Round Table leaders to adapt, adopt, and maintain strategies for sustainability. Wally Rueckel, one of the two founders of BCWRT, was himself a founder of the CWRT Congress whose goal is to offer education and networking to Civil War round tables.

In September 2021, Wally Rueckel was presented with the Founding Member CWRT Congress Award in Scottsdale, AZ.

The following year the CWRT Congress initiated two awards for Civil War Round Tables, one of which was the *Wally Rueckel Innovation Award* which celebrates the CWRT that has successfully sought to improve their organization in a variety of ways.

Well done and well deserved, Wally!

Civil War Views

North Anna Battlefield Park

We thank BCWRT member Jim Buell for thinking of us to share his notes and pictures from a visit to North Anna Battlefield Park in Hanover County, VA

My wife and I visited this battlefield one day prior to the 160th anniversary of the start of this engagement, this past spring. The battlefield is part of the New Hanover, Virginia county parks and recreation department. It is a wonderful place to visit, and we encourage others to take this in, especially if you are driving along I-95. The location is 11576 Verdun Road, Doswell, Virginia. It was easy to find, we got off Exit 98 off 95 and our GPS took us to the parking lot of the park. There are also Virginia Civil War trail signs you can follow.

On May 21, 1864, Union General Ulysses S. Grant directed the Army of the Potomac away from Spotsylvania Court House in a turning movement toward Hanover Junction, today known as Doswell. The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, under the command of General Robert E. Lee, had checked Grant's southward advance at the Wilderness, May 5-6, and at Spotsylvania Court House, May 8-20, 1864. Grant was determined to continue his advance and maintained relentless pressure on the Confederate Army by threatening the vital rail junction in Hanover County.

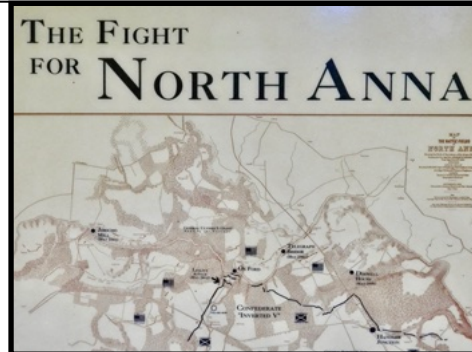
The battle took place May 21-26, 1864. The park is very well preserved; a lot of earthworks that are in great shape, wonderful paths to walk along with new waysides telling you what took place. There are two trails (Blue and Gray) to follow, both are easy to navigate and the various stops along the way are well marked.

The battle is noted for General Lee's ingenious inverted V defense. This overlooks Ox Ford, and you get a great sense of what the Union had to do to attack uphill, while the Confederates held the high ground. The information I could find indicates that these are some of the "best-preserved Confederate Trench Fortifications in existence" and we fully agree with that. This battle was a part of Grant's Overland Campaign and Lee's last chance to win a decisive victory over the Army of the Potomac.

Reach out to the parks department and you can get a brochure with a trail map. We also got information at the visitor center for the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park (ask at the desk if they have anything, we lucked out to get a folder).

Take some bug spray (you are in the woods), water, a picnic lunch and go and enjoy this park!

Jim Buell



Help Planning Your Civil War Battlefield Visits

If you find yourself needing help in planning your trip to various Civil War Battlefields in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, or Pennsylvania, here is a resource for you. The group that produces the **Civil War Trail Maps** for those states can also provide you some help in figuring out what to see, where to stay and eat at these various sites. Email Drew Gruber, Executive Director, Civil War Trails, executivedirector@civilwartrails.org.



A Volunteer Summer Vacation

Our Ladies' Forum coordinator and leader, Robbin Smith, and her husband Steve planned the first trip of their retirement and traveled out West to visit some of the National Parks. Robbin shared these photos of some of the beautiful places and sites they visited.



Robbin and Steve Smith at Monument Valley.

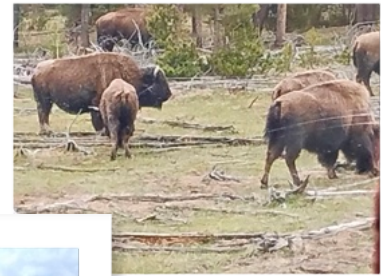
Zion National Park



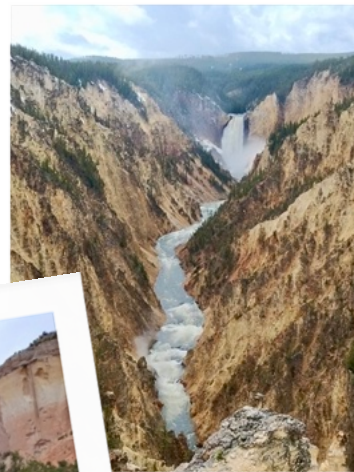
View of the Grand Canyon from the South Rim.



Horses from a Ute reservation grazing outside their cabin in Mesa



Bison on the side of the road



Lower Grand Canyon Falls



"Old Faithful"



Hot Spring at West Thumb / Lewis Lake in Yellowstone National Park.



Robbin and Steve wearing their Oak Island sweatshirts

Board Notes & Local Events

Notes from the September 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

1. Our balance as of the end of May is \$6,738.
2. We had approximately 500 people attend the meeting, of which 23 were new members.
3. Planning for the Fort Fisher tour in November will soon be complete and we will be able to send out information. A tour of Bentonville is also being planned for the Spring of 2025.
4. The scheduled speaker for October needed to cancel and Chris Fonvielle has agreed to take his place.
5. New volunteers are needed for both the 50/50 and at the front end while people are arriving and checking in.
6. It was decided that our next scholarship will be awarded in honor of Charen Fink.

Our next Board meeting is Tuesday, October 8, 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 Celebrates 30th Year

Wilmington's Cape Fear Civil War Round Table (CFCWRT) was established in 1994 and to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of the club, the round table is hosting a special event to look back on its history. The October event is open to members only but it will be back to "business as usual" in November.

The first president of Wilmington's Cape Fear Civil War Round Table was George Slaton who led the organization until the year 2000.

The CFCWRT first met in October 1994, and the first speaker was Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Ph.D., who later joined the faculty of UNCW.

Following George Slaton, Professor Fonvielle led the CFCWRT from 2000 through 2006, followed by David Norris (2006-2010) and Bob Cooke (2010-2018). Bill Jayne was president of the round table from 2018 to 2024 and saw it through the devastating Hurricane Florence in 2018 and the COVID phenomenon. At its September 2024 meeting, members elected new officers as well as at-large members of an executive committee and set the group on a course for sustained excellence in programs, tours and educational endeavors. Ms Yelena Howell has been elected the new president of the round table as it begins its 31st year.

Southport Historical Society Programs

Southport Suzie's Monday Speaker

Monday, September 23, 6:00 pm

Southport Suzie's (in Big Lots shopping plaza)

Come join us for our Speaker Series featuring Stephen Burns from the Southport Historical Society as he talks about the rise and fall of the WB&S, Southport's railroad.

Have a drink or snack and enjoy learning Southport History. No reservations required.

"John N. Maffit the Prince of the Privateers"

Thursday, September 26, 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Southport Community Center

223 E. Bay St.

Learn about the career of John Newland Maffit, especially his time stationed at Fort Johnston and his service to the Confederacy as a Blockade runner. See artifacts from his life and meet his great-great-grandson, Robert Maffit.



Muster Notes and Notables

**The September BCWRT meeting is Tuesday, October 1, 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	Chris Fonvielle: Advisor
Ann Birdsall: VP & Director	Jim McKee: Advisor
Jim Dunn: VP & Director	Chris Mackowski: Advisor
Jennifer Chapman: Secretary & Director	Skip Maxwell: Advisor
Tom Kehoe: Treasurer & Director	Roy Pender: Advisor
Bruce Jordan: Director	Wally Rueckel: Advisor
Chuck Roedema: Director	Wade Sokolosky: Advisor
Gar Dowell: Advisor	Robbin Smith: Advisor
Charen Fink: 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.

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