

Christmas during the Civil War-era is the focus at October 31st Ladies' Forum



The Civil War Ladies' Forum, sponsored by the Brunswick Civil War Round Table, will hold its annual meeting on Monday, October 31st. This year's presentation is entitled, "Origins and Traditions of Christmas Celebrations in the mid-1800's." The meeting will be held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Southport, across from the Post Office. All ladies are invited. Registration begins at 5:00PM, and will conclude around 8:00PM. The attendance fee is \$5, and can be applied toward the \$25 annual membership dues to the Brunswick Civil War Round Table which can include a spouse. The meeting is free to current Round Table members.

The evening promises to be interesting as well as informative with guest speaker Betty Vaughn entertaining her audience with her PowerPoint presentation. As general background during this period, soldiers not actively campaigning celebrated Christmas in several ways. Some would use salt pork and hardtack to decorate Christmas trees. Others dispersed food and supplies to the poor with mules pulling carts decorated to resemble reindeer by having tree branches tied to their heads.

Carols, hymns, and seasonal songs were sung during the period, with songs such as "Deck the Halls", "Oh Come All Ye Faithful", "Jingle Bells", and "Up on the Housetop". Thomas Nast, caricaturist and political cartoonist, was very popular during this period, including drawings of Santa to everyone's delight. And, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote his pacifist poem, "Christmas Bells" on Christmas Day, 1864.

Betty J. 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 in Greenville, NC with a B.S. degree. She 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.

As an incentive to attend the October 31st meeting, homemade period refreshments will be served, door prizes awarded, Civil War music will be played, along with additional topics and presentations will all be part of the evening's festivities. For more information, contact Charen Fink at dcftandm@hotmail.com, or call (330) 507-2773. You can also learn more about the Ladies' Forum by going to the Brunswick Civil War Round Table's Facebook page, or visit their new website.