

BRUNSWICK CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Adventure and peril take to the high seas at next Civil War Round Table

Blockade runners, whether on the high seas or steaming up the Cape Fear River toward Wilmington, are a curious subject for most folks. In fact, blockade runners played a major role in the eventual outcome of the Civil War. For those eager to learn more, the Brunswick Civil



War Round Table turned to one of the most knowledgeable area historians on this subject, Jim McKee. Jim will be the featured guest speaker at the Tuesday, December 2nd meeting. His program is appropriately entitled, “Runners and Raiders,” and everyone is invited to come aboard!

During the Civil War, right here in Wilmington which was considered a blockade-running hub, runners thrived, using this port to supply the Confederates with



weapons, ammunition, medicine, and food by making risky trips through the Union blockade. Wilmington’s location was ideal because it was up the Cape Fear River, safe from direct naval bombardment, and protected by Fort Fisher. These vessels were shallow draft, slim, sleek ships designed to slip through these blockades, outrun Union warships, and make it upriver successfully to Wilmington until the fall of Fort Fisher in

January, 1865. In fact, many blockade runners who didn't succeed are the sunken shipwrecks off the Carolina coast.

Blockade runners relied on darkness and bad weather to make their runs, ideally on moonless nights. They would have to assess blockade positions to decide which of the two inlets, separated by Smith's Island and the Frying Pan Shoals, to determine which was less guarded. Each trip was an exciting adventure, with threats of peril, but worth it for the incredible profits that could be realized. These were exciting times, and the way Jim shares his vast knowledge with such enthusiasm you would think he was there watching events unfold first hand!

Jim is a life-long student of history, and is currently Site Manager at Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson Historic Site. Located on the banks of the Cape Fear River broadened his interest about what took place along that river about 160+ years ago. So blockade running became one of his prime interests. While his incredible four-page life story is too lengthy to share here, it's important to know his passion has always been American history. He has worked for the National Park Service in Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park where he helped operate two visitor centers, researched, and conducted many guided tours. Years later his career led him to the NC Maritime Museum at Southport. In addition, Jim has been an Advisor to this Round Table since its inception 15 years ago, always eager to share his thoughts and ideas which has had an impact on the organization's success. With his extreme enthusiasm for delivering history presentations, and his personable style of captivating his audiences, Jim is always a crowd pleaser.



This December 2nd meeting will be held at Hatch Auditorium on Caswell Beach. Registration begins at 6:15PM. The program starts at 7:00PM. The visitor fee remains at \$10, and may be applied toward the \$25 annual membership dues, which importantly can include a spouse. Incidentally, about one-third of our audiences are female!

For more information about the meeting or the Round Table, please contact president John Butler at Brunswickcwr@gmail.com, or call him directly at (404) 229-9425. Or, visit our website at Brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com for background and current information, news, and updates, or our [Facebook page](#).