

BRUNSWICK CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Wilmington's unbelievable topsy-turvy history revealed



It was during the mid-1860s when Wilmington transformed from a thriving, prosperous Confederate port into a Union-occupied city struggling with the end of slavery and the turmoil of Reconstruction. No historian knows this incredible period of Wilmington's history better than popular local historian, Chris E. Fonvielle

Jr., PhD. Chris will share his knowledge at the Tuesday, November 4th meeting of the Brunswick Civil War Round Table, naming his presentation, "A Town Turned Topsy-Turvy: Wilmington during the Civil War."

This title cleverly captures a dramatic reversal of fortune. In 1860, Wilmington was North Carolina's busiest port and most populated city, built on the export of naval stores (turpentine, tar, and pitch), and some cotton. By 1863, Wilmington continued to play a pivotal role during the Civil War because it also became the Confederacy's busiest and most vital Atlantic seaport. It was clearly a boomtown for blockade-runners smuggling luxury goods and military supplies to the Confederate army. European blockade-runners, who risked the journey to profit from the demand, turned the city into a lavish hub of activity, so much so that Wilmington soon became known



as the “Lifeline of the Confederacy.” However, that reversal of fortune occurred when the Union army captured Fort Fisher in January, 1865, along with a victory at the Battle of Wilmington when Federal troops occupied the city on February 22, 1865, effectively sealing the Confederacy’s fate.

Returning by popular demand, Chris always captivates his audiences with his vast knowledge of local history along with his vibrant and dynamic personality. He is a native of Wilmington, and has a lifelong interest in the Civil War, North Carolina, and Cape Fear history. He is Professor Emeritus from the Department of History at UNC Wilmington, and recipient of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine presented by Governor Roy Cooper. In addition he has published books and articles focusing on the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the history of Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear.



This 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. Everyone is invited. 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 their website at Brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com for background and current information, news, and updates, or their Facebook page.