

BRUNSWICK CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Round Table announces its 2025 - 2026 programs

During the past 15 years, the Brunswick Civil War Round Table audiences have become knowledgeable while being entertained by prominent Civil War historians who spoke about events and activities that occurred during the infamous four-year Civil War period. These thought-provoking programs are the main reason visitors that come to meetings become members, and members keep coming back. And this momentum is a major reason this non-profit organization continues to hold the envious reputation of being the largest Civil War round table in the country with almost 1,200 members!

Looking ahead, the coming season will once again live up to its well-earned reputation. Speaker commitments have been confirmed, and their diverse topics are unique, so that there is assurance that programs will be of interest to everyone as demonstrated in the following 2025 – 2026 schedule.

Tuesday, September 2nd: **“Confederate General Robert E. Lee.”** Since this is the first meeting of the new season, you are cordially invited to attend the meeting and meet Gen. Lee. He will be dressed in his Confederate uniform, of course, and is quite eager to share personal insights and answer your questions about his life, his illustrious military career and battlefield decisions. Actually, Gen. Lee is portrayed by **Thomas Jessee**, a respected and popular living historian dedicated to bringing history to life and mesmerizing his audiences.

Tuesday, October 7th: **“With Malice Toward None. With Charity for All?”** Those famous words spoken by President Abraham Lincoln in March, 1865 during his second inaugural address, offered a hopeful environment for the country. Notice the question mark in this title. It just wasn’t meant to be. Much of the sentiment died only six weeks later after Lincoln’s assassination. Guest speaker **Edward W. Gantt**, retired Navy Captain and historical interpreter, explores his in-depth assessment of events during the period of 1865 to 1895 which coincidentally reverberates to this day.

Monday, October 20th: The Civil War Ladies’ Forum (sponsored by BCWRT): **“Confederate Spy Rose Greenhow.”** Rose was a prominent antebellum society hostess in Washington, D.C.. However, with her network of Confederate spies, she was credited by Jefferson Davis for the South’s victory at the First Battle of Bull Run. First-person interpreter, **Emily Lapisardi**, dressed in her Civil War-

styled gown, will portray Rose as if she was actually sharing the meeting room with you. Sorry guys, this is “ladies only!”

Tuesday, November 4th: **“A Town Turned Topsy-Turvy: Wilmington during the Civil War.”** No historian knows more about Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear, especially during the Civil War-era, than our own renowned local historian, **Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr.**, Professor Emeritus at UNCW. He amazes audiences when he shares his vast knowledge and fascinating stories about Wilmington when it played a crucial role in the 1860s, and was considered the Confederacy’s most important city. Who knew that? Just ask Chris!

Tuesday, December 2nd: **“Runners and Raiders.”** Consider exciting adventure, imminent peril, and boring quarantine...all for unbelievable profit. That is what blockade runners realized running in and out of the Cape Fear River during the Civil War. Popular local historian **Jim McKee**, site manager at Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson State Historic Site, will focus his audience on a rare adventure into these ironclad vessels, and the critical Confederate roles they played within North Carolina, as well as fierce localized battles off the Carolina coast.

Tuesday, January 6, 2026: **“Treasure and Empire in the Civil War: The Panama Route, the West, and the Campaigns to Control America’s Wealth.”** Across North America, Civil War campaigns were waged over whether the United States or the Confederacy would dominate lands, mines, and seaborne transportation networks of the country’s much needed mineral wealth. Guest **Neil P. Chatelain**, historian, professor, and author, delve into this thought-provoking topic which has never been discussed in our previous Round Table meetings.

Tuesday, February 4th: **“The Atlanta Campaign: Missed Opportunities.”** In the summer of 1864, Atlanta became the linchpin of the South’s hopes and the North’s determination. Each side was seeking victory. The city became the epicenter of a battle that became the turning point of the war, where lost opportunities and false hopes prevailed. It’s a chilling saga between two very determined armies. Volumes have been written about the Atlanta Campaign, none more captivating than guest speaker and prolific author, **David A. Powell**.

Tuesday, March 3rd: **“The Incredible Odyssey of Nicholas Said: From Central Africa through Czarist Russia to the Frontlines of the Civil War.”** Journalist and author **Dean Calbreath** will attend this meeting to share the forgotten history of Nickolas Said. Said’s adventures began in a thousand year-old African kingdom. He was a master of languages, a collector of knowledge, and a friend to kings and tsars. Oh, by the way, he later became a Union Army sergeant in the Carolinas,

Georgia and Florida! Historians consider Dean's book about Said as "essential reading."

Tuesday, April 7th: **"Competing Visions of the Post-war World: Military Reconstruction and Southern Resistance in North Carolina."** With the war ended, serious questions arose; like how to bring Confederate states back into the Union, treating enslaved individuals, and how the federal government can begin to heal the nation's wounds? Returning guest speaker **Angela Zombeck, Ph.D.** shares critical insights into what seemed to be impossible odds. Both sides clearly had opposing visions, but as you will learn, it would take time and patience to heal.

Tuesday, May 5th: **"The Fight for the Old North State: The Civil War in North Carolina, January – May, 1864."** At this 16th anniversary meeting of the Round Table, award-winning author, **Hampton Newsome** returns to reveal a desperate ploy by Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederates during the early months of 1864. The objective was intended to gain momentum right here in eastern North Carolina. Despite all efforts, including some successes by Lee's army and his ironclad gunboats, the Civil War was finally coming to a close.

Everyone is invited! As a reminder, the upcoming season begins on Tuesday, September 2nd, the day after Labor Day. Meetings are held at Hatch Auditorium on Caswell Beach. Registrations begin at 6:15PM. Programs start 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. By the way, about one-third of our audiences are female!

For more information about the Round Table, the upcoming season, or if you wish to become a member, please contact president John Butler at Brunswickcivilwarroundtable@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.

