THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Mike Powell

There is an old saying that every story has three sides: my side, your side and the truth. In a court room, truth is found by both sides presenting their arguments and the jury decides the truth. That is not a bad way to look at history. That is how Ed Bonekemper looks at history and his research provides him with evidence that he uses to decide his “truth.” I understand that his truth is not for everyone, but he comes to it properly.

Ed Bonekemper gave us a lot to think about on topics that many feel strongly. I get emails. If these topics raise passions today, what do you think it was like back in 1860? My research has led me to hold the same opinions as Ed on most of his topics. However, I will begin the search for a qualified historian who has different “truths” on these topics, to allow the membership to hear both sides and decide for themselves.

Thanks to Nathan Sloan and the Baptist Retreat Assembly at Fort Caswell for a great weekend of history. The Civil War symposium, “War on the North Carolina Coast,” was a huge success. I have attended a lot of symposiums and this one was one of the best! Besides great speakers, Nathan set up breakout groups that featured historians and the artifacts of their topic. Jim McKee had an exhibit on torpedoes of the war and got to blow up a bucket of water using the technology of the war. There were field trips and an artillery demonstration. The lodgings and meals were excellent. There was as much interaction with all the speakers as I have ever experienced and a lot of good conversation in a very relaxed atmosphere. I know that Nathan heard a hundred times to make this an annual event.

Congratulations to Charen Fink on her new book, “THE CIVIL WAR LADIES’ DEPARTMENT.” Charen has compiled her stories over decades and published them as a book. Look for her table at coming meetings to purchase a signed copy.

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Co-Editors

Charen Fink
Jim McKee
E. Gifford Stack
The Tuesday, May 30 gathering of the BCWRT will be the last meeting before the June through August break. Our speaker is sure to give a presentation that will linger over the summer. Chris Mackowski, one of our best-received historians, will present “Spotsylvania’s Bloody Angle.”

Chris is co-founder and editor-in-chief of “Emerging Civil War” and managing editor of the “Emerging Civil War Series.” He is professor of journalism and mass communications at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, NY, and historian-in-residence at Stevenson Ridge, a historic property on the Spotsylvania battlefield in central Virginia. He has also worked as a historian for the National Park Service at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, where he gives tours at for major Civil War battlefields (Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness and Spotsylvania). Chris has authored or co-authored a dozen books on the Civil War, and his articles have appeared in all the major Civil War magazines, including “Civil War Times,” “America’s Civil War,” “Hallowed Ground,” and “Blue & Gray.” He also serves on the national advisory board for the Civil War Chaplains Museum in Lynchburg, Virginia.

The Round Table is fortunate to have Chris return, as those who attended his previous presentation in February 2016 will recall. He received a well-deserved standing ovation following his animated and dynamic presentation on the last days of Stonewall Jackson. This will be a meeting not to be missed, since it will also be the final meeting until we resume again on Tuesday, September 5.

The focus of his presentation took place in May 1864, when Confederate forces clashed with the advancing Union Army in the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. The battle lasted almost two weeks and included some of the bloodiest fighting of the Civil War. The battle pitted General Ulysses S. Grant’s Union forces against General Robert E. Lee’s Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. The detailed movement and military tactics employed by Grant and Lee will be highlighted, with special attention given to the Union assaults as part of the battle known as the “Mule Shoe” and “Bloody Angle,” a section of the Confederate salient. After two weeks of fighting, the armies disengaged without a clear victory, but tactically Lee failed to stop Grant’s drive south toward the Confederate capital of Richmond. The battle cost 18,000 Union and 11,000 Confederate casualties, including nearly 20 hours of brutal hand-to-hand combat.

Registration and refreshments for the Tuesday, May 30 meeting will begin at 6:15 p.m. at Hatch Auditorium on Caswell Beach. The guest admission fee is $10, and can be applied toward the $25 annual membership dues.

For more information about the BCWRT or the upcoming meeting, contact president Mike Powell at (910) 278-3545, or email to mpowell6@ec.rr.com. Our website is brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com. You can also visit our Facebook page for interesting developments and announcements.
Ed Bonekemper began by giving us a “First” – The real reasons for the Civil War! (There are those who seemingly don’t understand why it happened.) Andrew Jackson was not among them. No negotiator could have pulled off a settlement deal. The $64,000 question is: “Was it States Rights or Slavery?” He gives us a teachable moment. More than 20% of our national wealth between 1855-60 was our slaves. New York bankers loaned heavily to slave holders. There were over four million slaves and simply not enough money or desire to liberate them. YES, Ed assures us, it was ALL about slavery.

You can editorialize about the Southern Belle and the idyllic life on the plantation as a wonderful life, but “Uncle Remus” and one million slaves marched into the Deep South between 1855-1860. Lost cause supporters stressed secession as a right. The Constitution gave them support by saying a runaway slave must be returned to his/her owner.

Ya just had to be there to hear Ed expand on Jefferson’s wording regarding equality. Ed also has us thinking by asking, “If it was all about States’ Rights, why didn’t they just say so?”

Our speaker addresses retrograde Reconstructionism under President Johnson. Ways were found to keep blacks subservient and be made into poorly paid pawns. He suggests that the concepts and character of “Quasi-slavery” did not go away until WW II.

Ed ends with both a scintillating question and answer. Could the South have won the War? YES!! All they needed to get was a tie. The North needed a complete win. Grant (or even someone “Grant-like”) changed the balance. He fights like a bulldog. Lee squandered his manpower and had no replacements. The North did! He cared too much for Virginia and let the Western Theater “ride off into the sunset.” Longstreet was the scapegoat of Gettysburg. Lee lost that battle by only engaging one-third of his troops at any given time.

The finality of Alexander Stephens’ (VP of the Confederacy) cornerstone speech says it all, “The Negro is not equal to the white man.” The storm rolled in but the strong winds of brutal economic war (not complete devastating war) waged by the North signaled a win. The cause - slavery - Ed concludes, dies a slow, twisting and convoluted death.

Would you want to live in a nation whose founding principle was the right to secede from that body over any contested political disagreement?

THINK ABOUT IT.

President’s...continued

Our next meeting, May 30, will be the last for the season. Our next meeting will be September 5. The speakers we have for the rest of the year are two returning favorites, Wade Sokolosky and Will Greene and two new speakers, P. Pickenpaugh and Kris White. As vacation season begins, we hope folks will visit and support the National Parks and State Historic Sites. Our support, as history lovers, is essential to their existence. Take some photos and we’ll put it on FACEBOOK and in the newsletter.

Our membership has been extraordinarily generous lately in donations. Artwork, prints, commemorative plates, books and the USS Monitor. Thank you all, very much.

Mark your calendars for the September 17 trip on the Cape Fear River with Chris Fonvielle.

An often asked question is, “What were the roles of women in the Civil War?” Understandably, all were the wife, mother, sister, or aunt of every soldier. As for the occupations of these ladies and to make the query easier to answer, the following - listed by category - is a sampling of just a few of those women.

**Nurses**

Sarah Edmonds (right): Born in Canada and ran away at 16, enlisted and served as a nurse while disguised as a soldier.

Phoebe Yates Pember (left): Matron at Chimborazo in Richmond. She had to keep the alcohol under lock and key.

Sally Thompkins (right): Her hospital was in the home of Judge John Robertson, losing only 73 patients out of approximately 1,334.

Maryann Bickerdyke: Known as “Cyclone in Calico” from Ohio. She cleaned up hospitals fouled with blood, urine and vomit. She stated her authority came from the Lord God, Almighty.

Susie King Taylor: She was the first black nurse, serving in the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, later called the 33rd U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment where her husband served four years. She was never paid.

**Doctors**

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell: The first woman doctor in America to graduate from a medical school and who organized the Women’s Central Relief Association. She was a pioneer in educating women in medicine.

Dr. Mary Walker: Born in New York and served three years as a nurse and the fourth year as an assistant surgeon. As an activist she lectured on women’s rights, dress reform, suffrage and also received the Medal of Honor. In 1917 this medal was withdrawn although she continued to wear it. In 1960 Jimmy Carter restored her medal.

Elizabeth Van Lew: Known as “Crazy Bet” because of her erratic behavior, she was the greatest spy of all time. She took food and medicines to Libby prison and spied for the Union for four years using Elizabeth Bowser, a freed slave, as her accomplice. Mrs. Bowser worked in the Confederate white house. Miss Van Lew had five relay stations and no spy was ever caught. She helped over 100 prisoners. Her cipher was eventually discovered in the back of her watch.

Sarah Edmonds: Also a spy.

Dr. Esther Hill Hawks: She was unable to serve as a surgeon because of her gender so then taught newly freed slaves on Hilton Head Island.

Emeline Pigott: Born in NC and lived across from the 26th NC. She entertained Union soldiers to gather intelligence and also from local fishermen. She carried info in big pockets under her hoops weighing up to 30 pounds. She went to Kinston, New Bern and Concord with the wounded. When arrested she ate some of the incriminating info and shredded others.

**Soldiers**

Jennie Hodgers/Albert Cashier: Enlisted at age 19 and never wanted to live as a woman, probably because her face was badly pock-marked. She was a very competent soldier. Later in life she was sent to a mental hospital, forced to wear long skirts, tripped and broke her hip and never recovered.

Frances Clayton/ Frances Clalin: When wounded in the hip her identity was discovered. She returned to the army and learned to swear, smoke, drink and better conceal her gender. She also was a competent soldier.

Sarah Malinda Blaylock: She and husband Keith enlisted in the 26th NC Infantry. They were pro-Union. Keith rolled in poison ivy to leave the army to engage in guerrilla operations into NC Mountains.
Please Keep your Seat for a Few More Minutes

In order to show rightful respect to our speakers, and as a courtesy to members sitting around you, please remain in your seats until our speaker has concluded with the Q & A.

Your leadership team emphasizes to all speakers that our round table starts promptly at 7 p.m. and our members do not want to stay till midnight! You’ll agree, with very few exceptions, our speakers understand “that the mind can only absorb what the seat can endure.”

Therefore, we kindly ask you not get up and leave until AFTER the program is concluded.

Thanks for your understanding and cooperation.

1864 Ballot Request

In 2014, a 1864 Illinois election Ballot was raffled off at the BCWRT November meeting. Mike Powell has been recently contacted by a party interested in purchasing that document. Will whoever won that raffle please contact Mike Powell mpowell6@ec.rr.com or call 910-278-3545.

New BCWRT Cover Up

Our last meeting of the season - Tuesday, May 30 - is your final chance to buy the new BCWRT hat before summer.

Costing a mere $15, the snazzy chapeau will provide plenty of shade and comfort as you visit Civil War sites during June, July and August.

The hats are available in either navy or stone and include the BCWRT logo.

Get yours at the Sutler’s Table at the front of Hatch Auditorium before or after our speaker’s presentation.

1864 Union Presidential Ticket to Elect Abraham Lincoln President and Andrew Johnson Vice President.

In 2014, a 1864 Illinois election Ballot was raffled off at the BCWRT November meeting. Mike Powell has been recently contacted by a party interested in purchasing that document. Will whoever won that raffle please contact Mike Powell mpowell6@ec.rr.com or call 910-278-3545.

Volunteer Computer Helper Needed

If you have a better than average understanding of setting up and/or trouble shooting laptop computers, the BCWRT can use your help.

You don’t need to be a “rocket scientist,” but if you have some knowledge of laptop computers and basic business software, please contact Jim Johnson @ 419.543-3157 or jimsclks@hotmail.com.

Thanks in advance for your assistance!
**Record that Civil War View**

This summer will you visit a Civil War battlefield, monument, park, or historical site? If so, share the memories with fellow Round Table members!

The editors of the *Call To Arms* newsletter once again want to publish the best photographs taken by members who visit significant Civil War locations this summer. Simply email your high resolution photo to E. Gifford Stack at egstack@cnsp.com, along with name of the photographer, location, date taken, and a short caption (15 words). We’ll share starting in our September 2017 newsletter…and our Facebook page, too.

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**Unique Civil War Tour Will Float Down Cape Fear River**

Most Civil War field trips take place, as the name suggests, on a field…or solid ground.

On Sunday, September 17, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., BCWRT members will have the opportunity to **float** on a unique Civil War tour, beginning in Wilmington and ending at Fort Anderson.

“This is a wonderful and rare chance to see former plantation sites, battery fortifications and other historically significant locales along the Cape Fear River,” noted Mike Powell, president of the BCWRT.

“Plus,” Mike added, “our narrator is Chris Fonvielle, THE expert on Civil War activities around southeastern North Carolina.”

Cost of the tour is $60.

Seating is very limited and according to John Walsh, the tour coordinator, many BCWRT members already have their name on the sign-up sheet. John asks that anyone interested in the tour reach him at 609-651-7719, or jdwalsh1@gmail.com. Information regarding payment will follow.

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**Raleigh Civil War Round Table Symposium**

**RECONSTRUCTION IN NORTH CAROLINA**

Saturday, June 24, 2017
Daniels Auditorium,
North Carolina Museum of History
Cost: $30
Further Info Contact: rcwrt@yahoo.com

0900-0930. Registration and welcome
0930-1045. Ernie Dollar -- Postwar Raleigh
1100-1215. Mark Bradley -- Federal Occupation of North Carolina
LUNCH – on your own
1315-1430. Dr. Angela Merritt – Women’s Role in Reconstruction
1445-1600. Fitzhugh Brundage -- Civil War in Memory and Memorials

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**GENTLE REMINDER: WE DON’T MEET IN JULY AND AUGUST. OUR FIRST MEETING OF THE 2017-18 SEASON IS TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.**
Jim Johnson, a BCWRT Vice President who among his numerous responsibilities helps coordinate membership issues, recently sat down with the Call to Arms editors to answer questions regarding membership. Following are his informative responses.

**When does a BCWRT membership begin?**
Jim: When you became a member of the BCWRT, the month in which you joined becomes your membership anniversary month. The membership is for one year, including a ten-month period of quality programs from renowned historians, academics, and recognized Civil War experts. We take time off during July and August.

**When is my membership due for renewal?**
Jim: Memberships are up for renewal on the first day of your anniversary month. During the month prior to your anniversary, we will send an email reminder that your membership expires on the first of the following month.

**How can I pay my renewal?**
Jim: Members may renew membership in one of two ways: 1) submit a $25 personal check to BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461; or 2) when attending the meeting during your anniversary month, you may pay by check or cash during the lobby registration prior to the start of the meeting. Also, while you are checking in for a meeting, you may ask the registrar when is your anniversary month…it’s on the computer app we use to check you in for the meeting!

**What if I forget to mail in my renewal or pay at a meeting?**
Jim: We consider everyone a valued BCWRT member. If you forget and miss your anniversary renewal, you will receive a personal courtesy contact, via phone or email, as a gentle reminder that we hope you will renew your membership by the next program.

**I’m still confused about the family membership. How does that work?**
Jim: When joining BCWRT, your annual $25 membership dues is good for either yourself or you and your spouse. In other words, there is no extra charge for both a wife and husband being under the one $25 membership. About the only difference is when you register at the meetings — if it is a joint membership, we’ll ask if one or both of you are attending. This is how we now determine attendance.

**I’ve got a question that isn’t covered above. Who do I contact?**
Jim: As mentioned, we consider every member — whether belonging since 2010 or just joining this year — to be a valued BCWRT associate. For any questions, please feel free to contact me at jimsclocks@hotmail.com or (419) 543-3157. And, I’d like to add, thank you to everyone for participating in the largest Civil War round table in the country!
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE BCWRT

Joining the largest Civil War Round Table in the US is a snap! Our annual dues are $25 for individuals, as well as couples. Students are free of charge. Non-members are welcome to attend our monthly meetings (usually held the first Tuesday except for our July-August vacation), paying $10 per meeting, which is applicable for membership!

Please make checks payable to BCWRT. Payments for renewal memberships are due on the month of your initial membership. New membership applications and checks, as well as renewal payments, may be given to the registration desk at our monthly meetings. If you prefer, send payments (and if appropriate your initial membership application) to: BCWRT, PO Box 10161, Southport, NC 28461.

NAME(S):__________________________________________________________

STREET ADDRESS:_________________________________________________

CITY/STATE/ZIP:___________________________________________________

LANDLINE PHONE:______________________CELL:_____________________

EMAIL:____________________________________________________________

Commemorative Plate to be Raffled

Thanks to a BCWRT member’s thoughtful donation, you could own a commemorative plate from the Danbury Mint. Entitled, “The Generals Were Brought to Tears,” the dish is the first in the series, “Jackson and Lee: Legends in Gray,” and was issued in 1994.

The plate will be raffled at our last meeting of the season, Tuesday, May 30.

Raffle tickets are only $1 each!

Kinston Symposium

Views from the Homefront

A Symposium Presented by the CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center and CSS Neuse Gunboat Association

Saturday, June 10, 2017 – 9:45 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

$15 per person, includes four presentations and admission to the museum ($10 discount rate for students and teachers – CEU credit available) Lunch on your own – explore the great options available in downtown Kinston!

Presenters
William H. Brown, Archives Registrar, State Archives of North Carolina
Michelle Lanier, Director, NC African American Heritage Commission
Dr. Angela Marritt, Assistant Professor of History, Meredith College
Dr. Jaime Martinez, Associate Professor of History, UNC-Pembroke

The CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center and CSS Neuse Gunboat Association in Kinston are conducting a symposium, entitled “View from the Homefront,” Saturday, June 10, from 9:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The event costs $15 and includes four presentations and admission to the museum.

For more information or to register, contact Rachel Kennedy at rachel.kennedy@ncdcr.gov or 252-526-9600.
Snapshots from the May Meeting - Speaker Ed Bonekemper and 403 members and guests attended our May 2 meeting, including these active Civil War buffs. (Photos by Chuck Roedema)
The Brunswick Civil War Round Table is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization that meets on the first Tuesday of each month, except July and August. Unless otherwise noted, meetings will be held at:
Hatch Auditorium, NC Baptist Assembly
Fort Caswell, Oak Island, NC
Registration is open at 6:15 p.m. and the program starts at 7:00 p.m.

The BCWRT site can be found under brunswickciviwarroundtable.com. All of the information on the website, including current and past issues of this newsletter, is available to everyone, no user name or password is required. Our new Facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable/. Both locations contain helpful information on future speakers, trips, as well as interesting Civil War information.