

The official newsletter of the Cape Fear Civil War Roundtable

December Program to Feature Dr. Everard Smith on “Civil Warriors”

By Bill Jayne, CFCWRT President

The December meeting of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table features a presentation by Dr. Everard Smith, Ph.D., titled “Civil Warriors.” The presentation is scheduled for Thursday evening, December 14, at centrally located St. John’s Episcopal Church in Midtown Wilmington near Independence Mall. Doors open at 6:30 and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

Local historian, former UNCW professor, and Round Table favorite, Dr. Everard Smith returns to our Round Table with another fascinating presentation on a totally new topic. Ev will focus on the volunteer soldier and some of the things he used and experienced in his everyday Army life. The presentation will be an overview of weapons, uniforms, tactics, medicine, and camp life of both sides including a display of a few actual relics.



A native of Washington, D.C., Dr. Smith received his B.A. degree from Yale and his Ph.D. in history from UNC Chapel Hill. From 1991 to 1993, he was a senior administrative officer and adjunct professor of history at UNCW. From 1994 until his retirement in 2015, he was employed

Membership Report

By Bruce Patterson
CFCWRT Secretary

Since our last report, members not only enjoyed our regular November meeting (reviewed elsewhere), but also a visit to the ***Wilmington Railroad Museum***. The museum event was a special evening during which members enjoyed a discussion of the *Wilmington and Weldon Railroad* (Circa 1864-65) that linked Wilmington to Confederate General Lee's forces entrenched around Petersburg Virginia in the waning days of that great conflict. A wine and deli table enhanced a most delightful event that included a museum tour coupled with an opportunity to view the museum's extensive model train operation.

We are always pleased to welcome new members and we did so at the November meeting. Mother-son duo, **Kim and Roman Berger** join us from the *Riverhead CWRT* (Riverhead, LI, NY) and now reside in Leland (Magnolia at Mallory Creek). **Nick Savastano**, a Brunswick CWRT member and residing in Southport, joins us as well. Welcome aboard folks!

A reminder that ***all members are recruiters***. Should your membership be up for renewal, please send your \$30 annual dues to **Treasurer Mike McDonald at CFCWRT, 8387 East Highcroft NE, Leland, NC 29451**.

by the North Carolina Department of Information Technology as a senior networking analyst for voice, video, and data.

Dr. Smith's service to the community includes membership on the Wilmington Historic Preservation Commission; on the Preservation Action committee of the Historic Wilmington Foundation; and on the City Council-appointed Advisory Board of the Hannah Block Historic USO Building and Community Arts Center, of which he was the chairman. He is a frequent public speaker on the Civil War and WWII periods, and has often conducted local history tours for visiting cruise ship passengers and other tourist groups. An active preservationist, Dr. Smith was a leader in the local movement to preserve the Hannah Block Building when it was endangered in the 1990s. He is the owner of the Larkins House, a 170-year-old home on Dock Street in the downtown Historic District.

Abner Small, a private in the 16th Maine Infantry, wrote a diary with a wealth of detail about soldier life in the Union's Army of the Potomac. He wrote that the regulation load of a Union infantryman was 58 pounds of "Army essentials." He also noted that uniforms came in only two sizes and that if you were a small man, you were to be "pitied," and if you were a big man, you were to be pitied "even more."

A haversack, carried over the shoulder, "often stinks with its mixture of bacon, pork, salt junk [usually salted beef], sugar, coffee, tea, desiccated vegetables, rice, bits of yesterday's dinner, and old scraps husbanded with miserly care against a day of want sure to come."

Shoes often wore out after hard marching and heavy items such as an overcoat or shelter half were thrown away. This phenomenon affected both sides to a great degree but Confederates relied more heavily on state governments for supplies such as uniforms so some units fared better than others.

There were no “miracle” fabrics to make uniforms more comfortable and durable and accouterments relied heavily on leather and metal. Rifled muskets were difficult to reload and not really all that accurate, especially since few soldiers received anything like systematic training in marksmanship. The most common weapon was a Springfield Model 1861 that was 56 inches long. The average soldier was about 5’7” or 5’8” tall. The rifle weighed about nine pounds.

Dr. Smith will fill the audience in on what camp life was like for the Civil War soldier and how battles were fought.

As usual, the meeting will be held in Elebash Hall at the rear of St. John’s Episcopal at 1219 Forest Hills Drive in Wilmington. The church parking lot and entrance to the meeting room is easily accessed via Park Avenue off of Independence Boulevard. See you there!



A Confederate soldier on the left and a Union soldier on the right. Dr. Smith’s lecture will focus on the lives of ordinary soldiers, including camp life and what it was like to fight in battle. It should be a very interesting evening, leaving attendees with a better “feel” for what these men really experienced.

Area Historical Association Events

By Yelena Howell, Tours and Trips Committee

Saturday, December 2, 4-8 pm. In Heavenly Peace: Bentonville Christmas Open House. 5466 Harper House Rd., Four Oaks. Come tour the home of John and Amy Harper as it may have appeared after the conclusion of the Civil War. Refreshments, music, a hayride and an ornament to paint and take home! \$5 admission, free for kids 8 and under. Contact: Colby Lipscomb, (910) 594-0789 or bentonvillebattlefield@gmail.com

Saturday, December 2, and Sunday, December 3. Old Wilmington by Candlelight 2023. A festive self-paced tour of select historic downtown properties. Tickets are \$50 and cover both days: <https://latimerhouse.org/event/old-wilmington-candlelight-tour-2/>

Saturday, December 2, 9 am-12 pm or 1-4 pm. Bentonville Battlefield Tour with Col. Wade Sokolosky. For information or to reserve your spot for these excellent walking tours, contact Wade at (252) 646-5553 or nchistoricaltours@gmail.com

Thursday, December 7, 4 pm. Volunteer Open House at the Bellamy Mansion. 503 Market St., Wilmington. Contact: jfenninger@bellamymansion.org

Friday, December 8, 4-7 pm. A Light in the Darkest of Night. Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site. 8884 St. Philip's Rd., Winnabow. A free self-guided tour of decorated ruins of St. Philip's. Gift shop will be open. Contact: Makayla Coley at (910) 371-6613 or makayla.coley@ncdcr.gov

Sunday, December 10, 1-530 pm. An 18th Century Christmas. Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site. 8884 St. Philip's Rd., Winnabow. Refreshments, games, crafts, candlelit service 5-530. \$5 admission, free for kids 12 and under. Tickets:

<https://friends-of-brunswick-townfort-anderson.square.site/upcoming-events?fbclid=IwAR3ZgDdLZ6KHxf4LbBLN05HnqQAqCSqCavcRitORkUCIHh7iHx-Fx0VZ2GA>

Wednesday, December 13, evening. Cape Fear Revolutionary War Table Holiday Program. Please stay tuned for details on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CapeFearRevolutionaryWarRoundTable> or contact CFRWRT@gmail.com

Saturday, December 16, 8-9 pm. Latimer House Night Tour. 126 S. 3rd Street, Wilmington. \$20: <https://latimerhouse.org/event/latimer-house-night-tour-2/2023-12-16/>

Monday, December 18, 6 pm-until. Federal Point Historic Preservation Society Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner. 112 N. Lake Park Blvd., Carolina Beach. Contact: info@federal-point-history.org

Wednesday, December 20 through Friday, December 22, 5-8 pm nightly. A free Christmas walk-through the Bellamy Mansion. 503 Market St., Wilmington.

Friday, December, 22, 730 pm. A Classical Christmas at St. James Episcopal Church. 25 S 3rd St., Wilmington. Come experience beautiful seasonal musical selections at our town's oldest church. <https://www.stjamesp.org/blog/a-classical-christmas/?occurrence=1746>

In November, the Roundtable Enjoyed Ed Lowe’s Lively Presentation about Longstreet’s Missed Opportunity

By S.R. Gist, Runner Correspondent

Our November 9 meeting featured a fast-paced lively exposition of the little studied campaign of Confederate Lt. General James Longstreet in eastern Tennessee in the waning days of 1863. Col. Ed Lowe told how, after playing a key role in Gen. Braxton Bragg’s smashing victory at Chickamauga, Longstreet and two divisions from the Army of Northern Virginia were detached from Bragg’s Army of Tennessee on a mission to wrest control of Eastern Tennessee from the Union command of Major General Ambrose Burnside.

Lowe, author of *A Fine Opportunity Lost: Longstreet’s East Tennessee Campaign, November 1863-April 1864*, explained that for a number of reasons, including bad weather and challenging terrain, Longstreet failed in his mission and East Tennessee, strongly pro-Union, was preserved from Confederate control.

Col. Lowe, U.S. Army (ret) is a graduate of the U.S. Command and General Staff College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and his analysis was very instructive in terms of better understanding the many failures of Civil War campaigns. His analysis of the ill will and poor coordination between Longstreet and his subordinate commanders—Lafayette McLaws, Evander Law and Micah Jenkins led to many missed opportunities.

We also welcomed new members Roman and Kim Berger and Nicholas Savastano.

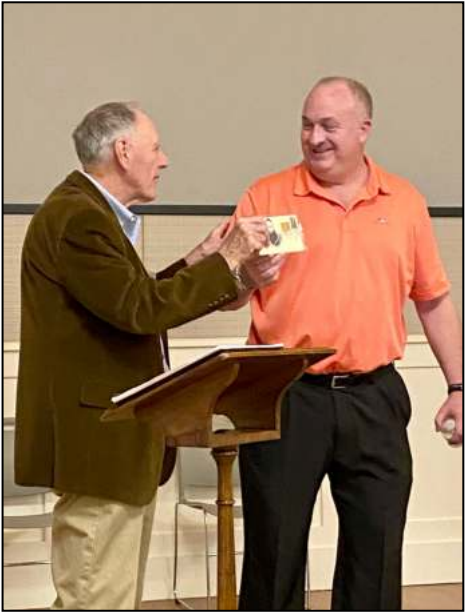




More pictures from the November meeting. As our Roundtable Secretary Bruce Patterson pointed out in a few sentences that had to be cut for space (sorry Bruce), the Elebash Hall in the Saint John's Episcopal Church at 1209 Forest Hills Drive in Wilmington is a very comfortable meeting place. There's plenty of parking and easy access.

As Bruce also pointed out (in more sentences that had to be cut), you may also pay membership renewals by credit card at <http://www.cfcwrt.org> or simply bring your check or cash to the December 13th meeting. We welcome early renewals.

Hope to see you in December!



Who was James Longstreet?

By Bill Jayne, CFCWRT President

Harold Knudsen, who spoke to our roundtable in September 2022, was one of many who attended a festival of sorts marking the 30th anniversary of the release of the movie “Gettysburg.” The Ted Turner financed movie, based on Michael Shaara’s novel, *Gods and Generals*, has become one of the most well-known artistic representations of the American Civil War.

Lt. Col. Knudsen, USA (ret) is the author of *The Confederacy’s Most Modern General* about Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, the commander of the I Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. Famously, Shaara’s novel and the “Gettysburg” film portray Longstreet in a pivotal role as the obedient but reluctant commander of the Confederate forces that assailed Little Round Top on the second day of the battle instead of moving around the flank of the position and then charge across wide open field to assault the center of the Union line on the third day.

Last month, we heard Col. Ed Lowe, USA (ret) talk again about Longstreet and his “opportunity lost” in Eastern Tennessee at the end of 1863. The exciting thing about looking again at the controversies, personalities and failed operations that characterized the Civil War is the fact that we continue to learn more about the history of this most pivotal event in our American saga.

In addition to Harold Knudsen’s book about Longstreet’s modern qualities and Ed Lowe’s soon to be released book about Longstreet in Eastern Tennessee, Cory M. Pfarr has written the recently published *Righting the Longstreet Record at Gettysburg: Six Matters of Controversy and Confusion*.

Why is Longstreet “suddenly” such a prevalent subject of Civil War scholarship? Elizabeth R. Varon, a professor of History at the University of Virginia has recently written *Longstreet: The Confederate General Who Defied the South, a biography of Longstreet*, a book that focuses a great deal of attention on Longstreet’s post-war life and does a lot to tie together the war and its aftermath, “Reconstruction.”

In a fine interview on the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop’s YouTube channel, Professor Varon discussed her book that was just released prior to Thanksgiving. One point she made resonated with me. She explained how the digitalization of sources ranging from newspapers and letters to official records has revolutionized research. Merely by typing “Longstreet” into a search function on, say, an archive of digitized historic newspapers, one can get a wealth of information that was literally buried in the past.

For example, she talked about the Longstreet who—while he firmly supported the idea of trying to engineer a battle fought on the tactical defensive—did not “sabotage” victory at Gettysburg by his reluctance to launch offensive assaults on strong Union positions. A search of southern newspapers after Gettysburg showed Longstreet was not scapegoated for the defeat at the time.

So, by looking longer and harder at the life and career of James Longstreet, perhaps we can come to a better understanding of how the north won the Civil War and also how Reconstruction unraveled in the years after the war.

*In the photo accompanying the article, Harold Knudsen, author of *James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Modern General*, poses with Tom Berenger, the actor who portrayed Longstreet in the 1993 movie "Gettysburg."*



Brunswick Civil War Roundtable Event to Showcase Photos

Civil War Photo Extravaganza!

Join Garry Adelman, chief historian at the American Battlefield Trust for a lively photography presentation covering all manner of Civil War events, people and places. Through then-and-now photographs, extreme zooms that examine the details buried deep inside the photos, and other techniques, Mr. Adelman will tell the story of the Civil War and its aftermath through the intensive and revolutionary wet-plate photography process and the truly unique individuals involved in the birth of photojournalism. He'll be sure to bust the most pervasive Civil War photography myths, answer your questions, and more!

Bio: Garry E. Adelman

A graduate of Michigan State University and Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, Garry Adelman is the award-winning author, co-author, or editor of 20 books and 50 Civil War articles. He is the award-winning author, co-author or editor of *Gettysburg in 3-D* (2013) *Antietam in 3-D* (2012), *Manassas Battlefields Then & Now* (2011), *The Civil War 150* (2011) *Antietam: Then & Now* (2005), *The Myth of Little Round Top* (2003), *The Early Gettysburg Battlefield* (2001), *Little Round Top: A Detailed Tour Guide* (2000), and *Devil's Den: A History and Guide* (1997) as well as nine Civil War image booklets. He is the vice president of the Center for Civil War Photography and has been a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg since 1995. He has conceived and drafted the text for wayside exhibits at ten battlefields, has given thousands of battlefield tours at more than 70 American Revolution and Civil War sites, and has lectured at hundreds of locations across the country including the National Archives, the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian. He has appeared as a speaker on the BBC, C-Span, Pennsylvania Cable Network, American Heroes Channel, and on HISTORY where he was a chief consultant and talking head on the Emmy Award-winning show *Gettysburg* (2011), *Blood and Glory: The Civil War in Color* (2015), *Grant* (2020), and *Battles America* (2022). He works full time as Chief Historian at the American Battlefield Trust.

See the next page for more details about this event.

Date: Tuesday, Dec 5th at Hatch Auditorium, Caswell Beach

Registration: 6:30 pm

Program starts at 7 pm.

All non-members will pay the \$10 guest member fee.

From the Bentonville Battlefield Facebook Page

Harper House Restoration Update 11/14/2023

Following a rigorous process of sanding and testing to ensure the highest quality work is being done, the restoration process is finally moving forward with painting the historic Harper House, beginning with primer. This process has taken a while because the restoration is being held to a very high standard of long-term preservation.

We continue to offer guided tours of the Harper House daily at 10:00, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00. Tickets are only \$2 for adults and \$1 for children (ages 5-12) and seniors (age 55+).

Come see us soon and follow us for more updates!



Editor's Note: The Harper House will look as it did during the Battle of Bentonville when the painting is finished. New windows and repaired and repainted shutters will also be a part of the renovation. The house is in remarkably good shape for having been built in 1855. Guided tours of the house are still available during much of the renovation work and are held four times a day at 10, Noon, 2 and 4.

Cape Fear Civil War Roundtable

President: Bill Jayne jayne.bill@gmail.com (910) 386-9203

Vice President: Al Turner allanturner67@gmail.com (703) 967-9667

Secretary: Bruce Patterson brucepatterson7338@gmail.com
(910) 794-8905

Treasurer: Mike McDonald rmmassoc8@gmail.com (414) 708-9794

Program Director: Jim Gannon 1jimgannon@gmail.com

Tours/trips: Yelena Howell ybh2035@uncw.edu

Audio/Visual Manager: Ed Gibson egibson759@gmail.com

Webmaster: Richard Buggeln rbuggeln@gmail.com

Newsletter: Fred Claridge frdclar@gmail.com





“Christmas Eve” by Thomas Nast published in the January 3, 1863 issue of Harpers Weekly magazine.

