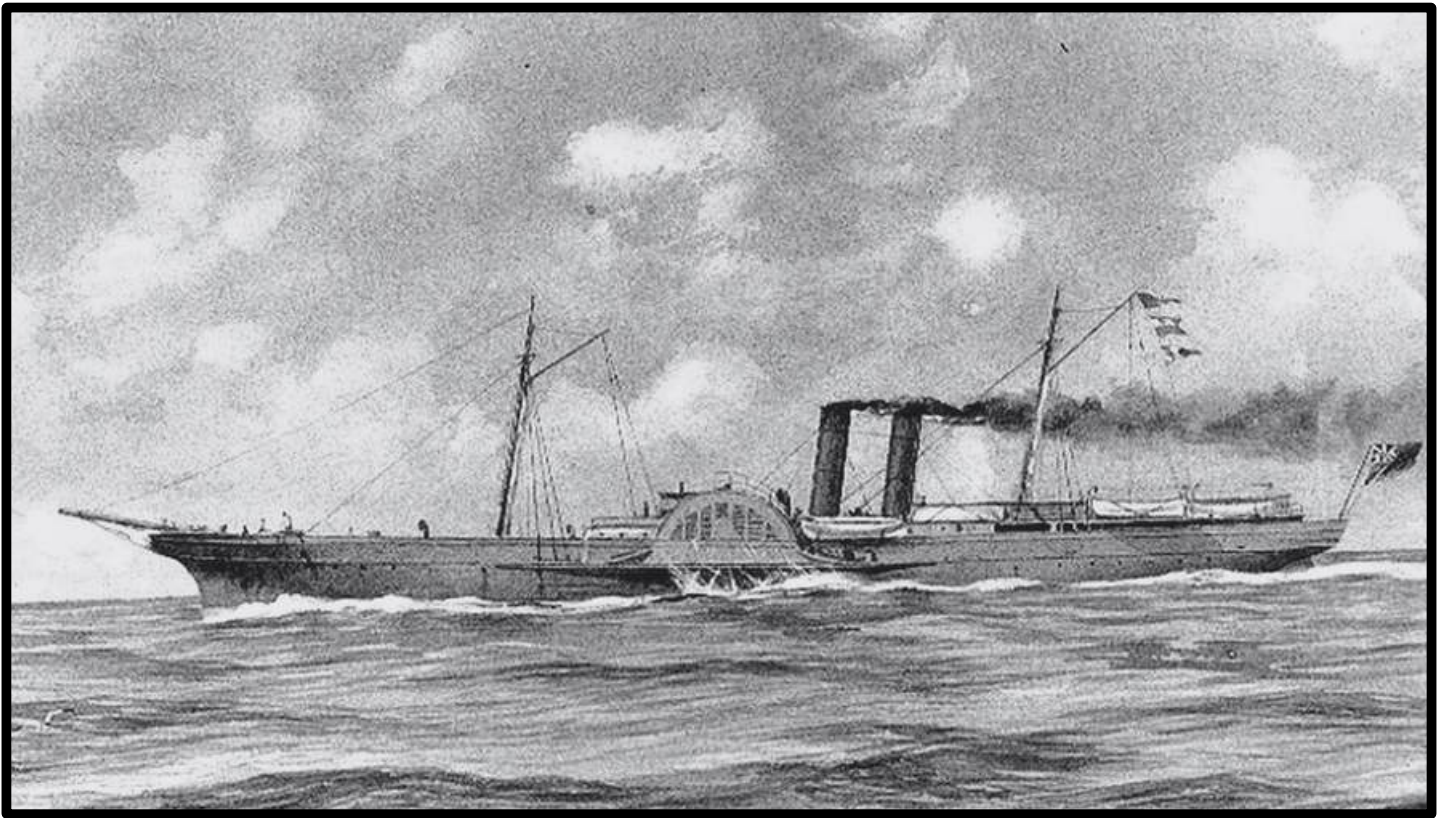




# The Runner

The Official Newsletter of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table



December 2024 | Volume 2 | Number 12





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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Members of the CFCWRT,

As the calendar turns to December, we enter a season of reflection and celebration. It's a time to look back on the year's accomplishments, the enriching discussions we've shared, and the growing appreciation for the history we all hold dear.

As we prepare to bid farewell to 2024, we also look ahead to a momentous occasion in 2025: the 160th anniversary of the battles at Fort Fisher and the closing days of the Civil War. These pivotal events in our nation's history offer a powerful lens through which we can examine themes of courage, sacrifice, and transformation. Fort Fisher, the "Gibraltar of the South," played a decisive role in shaping the course of the war, and its fall marked the beginning of the Confederacy's end.

Our Round Table will undoubtedly have much to explore in the coming months as we commemorate this anniversary and reflect on the broader lessons of the Civil War. It is our shared mission to keep this history alive, ensuring it continues to inform and inspire.

As we enjoy the festivities of the holiday season, let us also take pride in our dedication to studying and preserving the past. Together, we can finish this year strong and look forward to an even more engaging 2025.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a healthy, prosperous New Year!

With warm regards,

Matthew Howell  
Editor  
Cape Fear Civil War Round Table



# President's Address

By Yelena Howell

Dear members and friends,

“You got a fast car” because somehow, the year 2024 is already in the rearview mirror. These months have been quite eventful for our organization and the local community, not to mention the broader arenas of which we are a part. I hope that your involvement with the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table has provided you with a measure of intellectual and social stimulation, a sense of belonging and continuity, and the anticipation of more talks, books, and trips to come. From this perspective, “it was a very good year”, and I am grateful to be completing it in your company.



Perhaps facetiously, my Sinatra-worshipping father used to warn me, a reader of dictionaries and a daydreamer, that I was sure to be a student until the ripe old age of 40. I have surpassed Viktor's forecast by five years and counting and am inspired by the steadfast commitment of my betters to lifelong learning. One of the mythical father archetypes of Western civilization, Ulysses, proclaims to us through Lord Tennyson:

I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades  
 For ever and forever when I move.

When times are uncertain and time is inescapable, ruthlessly short and agonizingly long by turns, why not allow the promises of the “untravell'd world” of pages you will yet read and write, words you will yet hear and say, music you will yet revisit and discover and a myriad other glimmers of hope to continue carrying you forward along with the precious cargo of memories of where you have been? After thirty years' worth of great get-togethers, we are on our way to the next twelve meetings. Our Roundtable is our Roundtable. Thank you, fellow travelers, for your ongoing interest and support, and please enjoy the holiday season with your loved ones.

Warmest regards,

*Yelena*

Tune in live to our next meeting at <https://www.youtube.com/@CapeFearCivilWarRoundTable>  
 and view our archives anytime at <https://cfcwrt.org/>



# Membership Report

By Kim Berger

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table's November 2024 meeting was well-attended, even with the chilly and rainy weather. A total of 46 participants joined us, including several guests and family members.

Linda Lashley was accompanied by her son, John, while James Steele brought his son, Daniel. John Pilli introduced his friend, Dale Hafer, to the group. Kevin Poggi also attended as a visitor and expressed interest in becoming a member soon. We hope all our guests enjoyed John Quarstein's presentation on The Battle of Mobile Bay and look forward to seeing them again at our December meeting.

As Membership Chair, I've been working to streamline the check-in process. To make things easier, I've created an alphabetical sign-in sheet where members can simply initial by their names. A second sheet will always be available for new members, guests, and any missing names. Current members can also use this sheet to update their contact information. Despite these efforts, there are still three members who were not officially accounted for at the November meeting. If you think you may be one of them, please let me know. I also welcome any feedback on the new procedure!

## **Name Tags**

Name tags remain a work in progress. A few were missing at the November meeting, but replacements will be ready for December. Ideally, name tags should be handed in at the end of each meeting to ensure their availability for the next one. If you prefer to take yours home, that's fine—just remember to bring it back and sign in for the meeting.

## **Membership Renewals**

Renewal reminders were emailed to five members. We had two renewals in November, including the Bergers.

If your membership anniversary is in December or if you are otherwise renewing, you can submit your fee in one of three ways:

Mail it to: CFCWRT, 8387 East Highcroft NE, Leland, NC 28451

Pay Mike McDonald at the December meeting.

Renew online at: <https://form.jotform.com/213434374836156>

Your membership anniversary month is printed on the bottom of your name tag. If you're unsure about your renewal status, feel free to reach out for clarification.

## **Spread the Word**

Remember, we are all ambassadors for the Round Table. Invite your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors to join us. We will ensure every guest feels welcome.

# CFCWRT November Meeting

By John Jones



## “Sink Before Surrender!” John Quarstein Presents The Battle of Mobile Bay

On November 14, 2024, the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table once again welcomed renowned speaker and historian John Quarstein to regale us with a stirring presentation about one of the legendary nautical engagements of the Civil War. John is a native of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and divides his time now between his family farm in Still Pond, Maryland, and the historic Chamberlin Hotel in Hampton, Virginia. In addition to naval history, he is an expert on duck decoys and noted that a breakfast of oysters and whiskey is a good way to begin a day of duck hunting on the Eastern Shore.

Mr. Quarstein last spoke to us in September 2023, talking about the *CSS Albemarle*. He has authored 20 books (with a 21st soon to be published) and has written numerous articles, exhibits, essays, and documentaries. His titles include *A History of Ironclads: The Power of Iron over Wood*; *CSS Virginia: Sink Before Surrender*, and *The Monitor Boys: The Crew of the Union’s First Ironclad*. He is the winner of the 2012 Henry Adams Prize for excellence in historical literature.

Quarstein has also produced, narrated and written several PBS documentaries including the film series “Civil War in Hampton Roads,” a Silver Telly Award winner. Quarstein is the recipient of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s President’s Award for Historic Preservation, the Civil War Society’s Preservation Award, and the Daughters of the American Revolution Gold Historians Medal. He has been a guest on C-Span multiple times and has served as an adjunct professor at the College of William & Mary.

On August 5, 1864, U.S. Navy Rear Admiral David Farragut’s fleet of 18 ships, including four ironclad ships of the monitor type, in what amounted to a frontal assault, forced its way through a narrow channel obstructed by torpedoes (naval mines) and swept by artillery fire from nearby forts, and defeated a Confederate force commanded by Admiral Franklin Buchanan.

It was a battle of wills between the two highest ranking officers of each navy. Buchanan, born in 1800, joined the U.S. Navy as a midshipman in 1815. He had a sterling career as a naval officer, serving with distinction in the Mexican War, commanding a ship in the expeditions of Commodore Matthew Perry and the opening of Japan to western trade, first commandant of the U.S. Naval Academy and commanding officer of the Washington Navy Yard.



## CFCWRT November Meeting Cont.

Illuminating the strange divisions surrounding the leadership of the country around the time of the beginning of the Civil War, Mr. Quarstein told us that Captain Buchanan hosted a wedding reception at the Navy Yard that was attended by Abraham Lincoln. A young girl in attendance wore a dress with a Confederate flag design and was treated by Lincoln with good humor. More seriously, Buchanan, a veteran of more than 40 years service in the U.S. Navy, submitted his resignation from the service on April 22, 1861, because he thought his home state of Maryland would secede from the United States. Within a week, however, it became clear that Maryland would not secede and that federal control of the state would continue to allow the passage of troops from northern states. He again wrote to Navy Secretary Gideon Welles and requested the withdrawal of his resignation but Welles responded with the news that Buchanan's name had been "stricken from the rolls of the Navy" on April 22, the date of Buchanan's original letter of resignation.

Farragut, a year younger than Buchanan, was, perhaps even more of a "sea dog." Orphaned at a very young age, he was adopted by Commodore David Porter, the father of David Dixon Porter of Civil War fame. Farragut became a midshipman on his adoptive father's ship at the age of nine. Named James Glasgow Farragut at birth, the boy's father, a native of Minorca, Spain, was a Revolutionary War veteran and friend of David Porter, Sr. David Porter Sr., met and befriended Jordi Farragut Mesquida, from the Spanish Balearic island of Minorca. Mesquida joined the American navy in the Revolutionary War and changed his name to George Farragut. Entertainingly, from then on in his presentation, Mr. Quarstein, simply referred to the various David Porters as Porter 1, 2 and 3.

In late spring 1808, David 1 suffered sunstroke, and George Farragut took him into his home, where his wife Elizabeth Farragut cared for him. Already weakened by tuberculosis, he died on June 22, 1808. Elizabeth Farragut died of yellow fever the same day. Motherless, the Farragut children were to be placed with friends and relatives. Thus began young Farragut's long association with Porter 2 and Porter 3. Compounding the confusion, young George Farragut decided to change his first name to "David" when he became a midshipman at the very young age of nine. At the incredibly young age of 12, during the War of 1812, the youngster was given command of prize vessel taken by Porter 2's ship, the *Essex*.

As the Civil War unfolded, both Buchanan and Farragut played major roles and earned even greater distinction. Buchanan commanded the CSS *Virginia* (vice USS *Merrimack*—with a "k") in the fateful battle of Hampton Roads. On March 8, 1862, the ironclad *Virginia*, making just five knots, attacked the wooden-hulled steamships of the U.S. Navy, destroying two large steam frigates and killing approximately 240 Union sailors. In the fighting, however, Buchanan was seriously wounded by fire from U.S. forces on shore. Buchanan did not command the *Virginia* in its momentous clash with the USS *Monitor* in Hampton Roads the next day. His wound was serious and as he slowly recovered, he was transferred to the major port of Mobile, Alabama on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.



## CFCWRT November Meeting Cont.

By 1864, the stage was set for a furious clash at Mobile Bay. On board the USS *Hartford*, a wooden-hulled steam frigate, Farragut entered Mobile Bay, Alabama, 5 August 1864, in two columns, with ironclad monitors leading and a fleet of wooden ships following. When the lead monitor, the USS *Tecumseh*, was demolished by a mine, the wooden ship Brooklyn stopped, and the line drifted in confusion toward Fort Morgan. As disaster seemed imminent, Farragut gave the orders embodied by his famous words—“Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!” He swung his own ship clear and headed across the mines, which failed to explode. The fleet followed and anchored above the forts, which, now isolated, surrendered one by one. The torpedoes to which Farragut and his contemporaries referred would today be described as moored mines. Mr. Quarstein explained that most scholarship states that Admiral Farragut said “Damn the torpedoes! Four bells! Captain Drayton, go ahead! Jouett, full speed!” That was, perhaps understandably, shortened to the more pithy version known by all students of American history.

At the head of a seriously outgunned flotilla of ships, most of which were not ready for battle as the Union fleet quickly stormed past the forts, Confederate Admiral Buchanan onboard the ironclad CSN *Tennessee*, ordered his lieutenants to “Sink before surrender,” and directed the iron monster to attack the entire U.S. fleet. Mr. Quarstein told us that at this point Farragut reportedly, said “I didn’t think Old Buck was such a fool.” Buchanan, nonetheless, fought furiously and at one point Farragut’s second in command, Captain Percival Drayton saw Buchanan onboard the *Tennessee* and threw his binoculars at him, calling him an “infernal traitor.” Drayton was a South Carolinian who remained loyal to the Union.

As the *Tennessee* absorbed murderous punishment from the Union fleet, Buchanan was once again wounded. Taken below for medical treatment, he once again enjoined his officers to “sink before surrender,” but with the ship unable to defend itself, surrender came and the battle ended.

Although the city of Mobile remained in Confederate hands until 1865, the port was essentially closed to shipping and the Union victory became the first in a string of major Confederate defeats, including the fall of Atlanta and the Battle of Cedar Creek in the Shenandoah Valley that ensured electoral victory for Abraham Lincoln in the election of 1864, thus cementing Confederate defeat.



Graciously, Mr. Quarstein stayed for an extensive question-and-answer period after his presentation and also signed books for members of the audience. Such opportunities for personal contact with notable speakers are hallmarks of the round table. Our stated purpose is to “broaden the knowledge, understanding and interpretation” of the Civil War Era and this presentation achieved that purpose, par excellence.



# CFCWRT December Meeting

By Bill Jayne

## **Audience Participation Program Focuses On Generalship: Theory and Substance**



Tropical Storm Debby threatened the area back in August and we decided to cancel our program on August 11 rather than have members driving on flooded roads. As it turned out, Debby wasn't as severe as expected but emphasizing safety was the best course. Member John Weisz was poised to present the program back in August but instead we moved him in the schedule to December 12.

So now, we have the pleasure of inviting all members and friends to the December program titled, "Generalship: Theory and Substance." This audience-participation program will be presented by round table member John Weisz, a West Point graduate and retired U.S. Army officer. The meeting will be held on Thursday evening, December 12, at centrally located St. John's Episcopal Church in Midtown Wilmington near Independence Mall. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

John graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1974 with a degree in Engineering and minors in German and Military History. He retired from the Army in 1994 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He served in several leadership roles in Armored Cavalry, Armor and Infantry units and on the General Staff at Ft. Knox, KY. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff School and the Defense Logistics Executive program. He has published several articles in military journals.

For the program, John will describe the characteristics of successful generals in the Civil War. He will bring the audience into the study of campaigns through practical exercises. Teams will form and will be provided with the information needed by the commander and several options as to which maneuver to execute. The audience will not be provided with the identity of the generals and where the engagements were fought ahead of the exercise but, by the end, will surely be able to determine who and where.

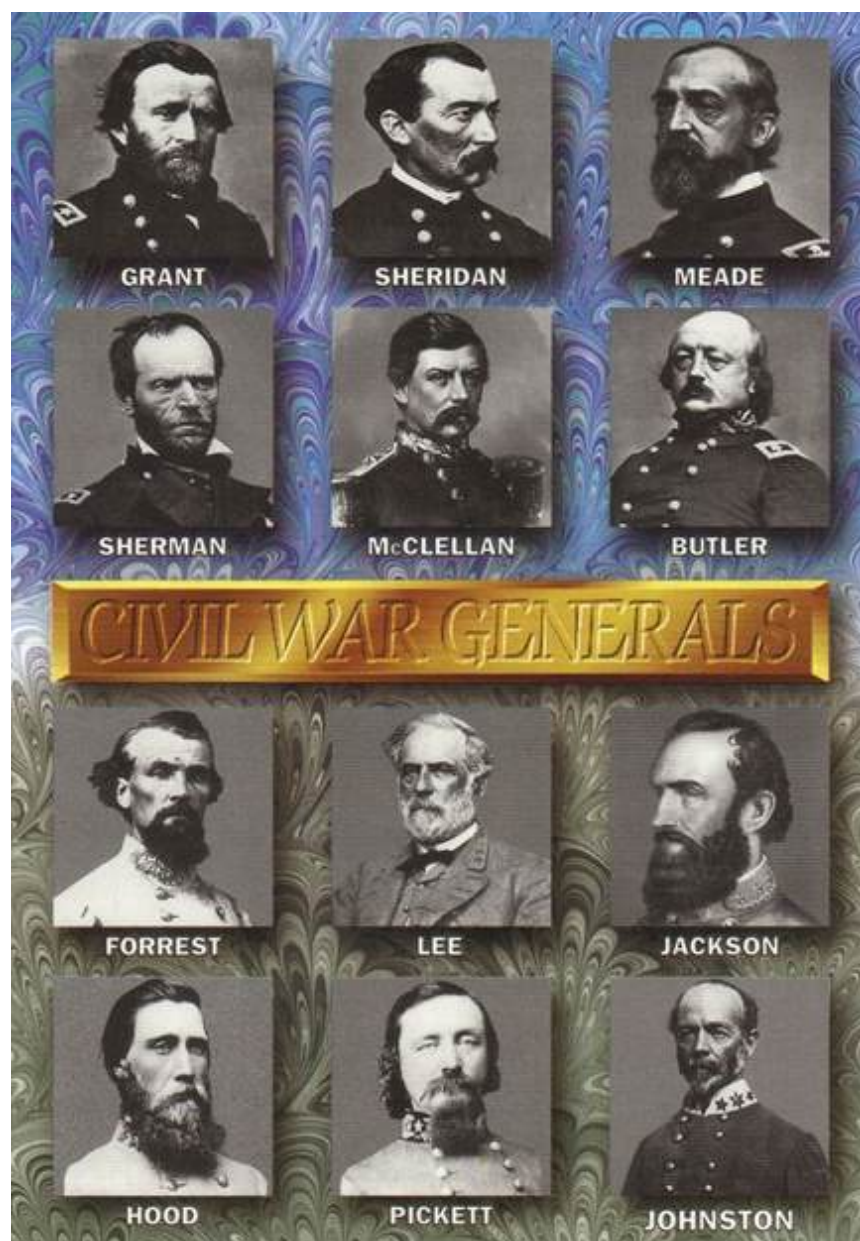




## CFCWRT December Meeting Cont.

As usual, the meeting will be held in Elebash Hall in St. John's Episcopal Church. Enter at the rear of the church, which is located at 1219 Forest Hills Drive. The church parking lot, close to the entrance to the meeting room, is easily accessed via Park Avenue off of Independence Boulevard. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and there is ample time to browse our used books table, and talk to other members of the round table. Remember, you are a recruiter. Ask a friend to come along and find out more about the round table. For information about membership, go to our website at <http://cfcwrt.org> and click on "Join".

See you there!





# Unveiling the Storm: Introducing War and Weather

By Matt Howell

Dear Members,

It is with great excitement that I introduce our new serialized feature, *Coincidence or Chemistry: Civil War Combat and its Effects on Weather*. Our member and sponsor Brandon Carter, Esq., authored this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts degree in History at the Virginia Military Institute in 2008.

Drawing on Edward Powers' seminal 19th-century work *War and the Weather*—as well as firsthand accounts from soldiers, historical records, and modern meteorological theories—this series uncovers the unique interplay between combat and the environment.

Carter weaves a compelling narrative that spans Civil War campaigns, the Mexican-American War, and even Napoleon's battles. His exploration of this topic will captivate readers with its blend of military history and environmental science.

## **The series will be published in five concise installments:**

- Part 1: Introduction to the phenomenon and Malvern Hill, the first key example of post-battle rain.
- Part 2: Patterns of post-combat precipitation during the Civil War.
- Part 3: Edward Powers' early theories on the relationship between combat and weather.
- Part 4: Connections to other wars, including the Mexican-American War and Napoleon's campaigns.
- Part 5: Modern insights into weather modification and a conclusion on Powers' legacy.

Each installment offers a rich and accessible look into this underexplored topic. We are thrilled to bring you this series and invite you to dive into the first chapter below.

Enjoy this unique perspective on Civil War history! As you ponder absorbing questions of correlation and causation, please note a comprehensive 2020 resource, Kenneth Noe's *The Howling Storm: Weather, Climate, and the American Civil War*, available at libraries and on Amazon at <https://www.tinyurl.com/ACWwx20>



## Coincidence or Chemistry: Civil War Combat and its Effects on Weather

By Brandon Carter, Esq.; Serialized by Matthew Howell

### Part 1: Malvern Hill & the Phenomenon of Post-Battle Rain

July 1, 1862, dawned hot and humid in the fields east of Richmond, Virginia. Over the course of one week, Confederate General Robert E. Lee, in his first campaign as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, had pressed General George B. McClellan's



Watercolor of the battle of Malvern Hill by Sneden

Union army from the outskirts of Richmond almost to Harrison's Landing, nearly twenty miles down the James. Only six days earlier, Union troops could set their watches by the bells of Richmond's churches. Now, they were in full retreat, or conducting a "change of base" as McClellan called it. The 1st of July would be the last day of fighting in what came to be known as the Seven Days Battles.

The Union position on Malvern Hill was as strong as any McClellan had ever held, or ever would hold. His engineers set up just under forty cannon across the crest of the hill, along with two divisions of infantry. Both flanks were protected by reserves. Gunboats provided additional artillery support from the James. All told, nearly 80,000 Union troops occupied Malvern Hill. The battle, which lasted until nightfall, cost each side dearly. Over 1,000 men were killed outright. The Confederates lost 5,650 men killed, wounded, or captured in their fruitless attacks. The Union army had lost 3,007 troops. The day had been a clear-cut Union victory. The scene after the battle was gruesome. General D. H. Hill famously remarked, "It was not war – it was murder." One Union officer still on the field early on the morning of July 2 said of the Confederate casualties that "enough were alive and moving to give the field a singular crawling effect."

Throughout the day on July 1, through the ebb and tide of the Confederate waves of attack, one thing was constant: Union artillery fire. Malvern Hill was unusual because it was one of the few battles of the entire Civil War in which at least half, if not more, of an army's casualties had been inflicted due to artillery fire. Early on the morning of July 2, something not so unusual happened. It had first occurred after the war's first significant land battle at Big Bethel, Virginia, on June 10, 1861. It was a natural phenomenon that soldiers took as a bittersweet occurrence. It was raining.



## Coincidence or Chemistry Cont.

Lt. Col. William Ogden McDonald, a surgeon in General Graham's brigade of the Union IV Corps, was understandably tired after Malvern Hill. He fell asleep by one of the roads that the Union army would be taking to their new base on the James River. He was awakened early the next morning by the noise of the retreating army. He joined his brigade on their march to Harrison's Landing on the James. Soon after, the rain began. It came in torrents. Lt. Col. McDonald noticed what seemed to be a link between the battle and rain. He observed, "And as was usually the case after a big battle it began to rain." He then spoke of the quickly deteriorating conditions of the march: "We marched along for a few miles thro [sic] the mud and rain." The Union march to the James would be miserable, but the rain that made it so was at the same time cleansing the blood of the dead and dying still on the hill from the sandy Virginia soil.

Civil War soldiers frequently made such observations in letters and diaries, and later in memoirs and regimental histories. However, since the close of the Civil War, only one attempt at a comprehensive, analytical study of the effects of combat on weather has been made. First published in 1871 and issued again as a revised edition in 1890, Edward Powers' *War and the Weather* contains letters sent to him from forty-two men who witnessed war firsthand, as well as his and their theories as to why precipitation so often followed battles. These letters are invaluable in not only determining what kind of weather followed battles, but also for the explanations that their writers offered to explain this phenomenon. As already noted, the rain that followed many battles was bittersweet to the men involved. For some, like General McClellan during his retreat to the James, it was an unpleasant nuisance. For others, like Joshua L. Chamberlain of Maine, it brought some relief.

Chamberlain was wounded a number of times during the war and was left to lie for periods of time following battles until help finally arrived. He wrote to Powers in a postwar letter that "these rains are balm to the fever and anguish of the poor body that is promoted to the ranks of 'casualties.'" Precipitation played a significant part in shaping the conduct of the Civil War, and Civil War soldiers played a significant part in, quite literally, triggering the precipitation. Yet the subject of war and weather has been all but ignored by scholars since Powers, and his book all but forgotten.

During the Civil War it rained with greater frequency than can be attributed to random chance after battles from Pennsylvania to Florida, from Virginia to Louisiana. Rain was mixed with snow after some fights. Precipitation also followed battles in the Mexican and in 19th-century European wars. We will begin by identifying the Civil War's major battles, and by identifying which ones were followed by precipitation.



# Notable Events in the Cape Fear Region

By Yelena Howell

**Friday, December 6, 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 remnants of St. Philip's. Gift shop will be open. Info: [brunswick@dncr.nc.gov](mailto:brunswick@dncr.nc.gov)

**Saturday, December 7, 5-8:30 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. Enjoy period refreshments and music by the campfire. \$5 admission, free for kids 8 and under. Info: (910) 594-0789 or [bentonvillebattlefield@gmail.com](mailto:bentonvillebattlefield@gmail.com)

**Saturday, December 7, 4-8 pm and Sunday, December 8, 1-5 pm. Old Wilmington by Candlelight 2024.** A festive, self-paced walking tour of community and private historic downtown properties. Tickets are \$50 and cover both days. Volunteers still sought and recompensed with free admission: <https://tinyurl.com/Aglow2024>

**Sunday, December 8, 1-5:30 pm. An 18th Century Christmas.** Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site. 8884 St. Philip's Rd., Winnabow. Refreshments, games, crafts, candlelit service 5-5:30 pm. \$5 admission, free for kids 12 and under. Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/EnchantedChristmas24>

**Saturday, December 14, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. First Battle of Kinston Bus Tour: 162nd Anniversary.** 100 N Queen St, Kinston, NC 28501. CSS Neuse Gunboat Association event, Dennis Harper in the lead. Tickets are \$10 ea. and limited to 28 participants: <https://tinyurl.com/1stKinston>

**Monday, December 16, 6 pm-until. Federal Point Historic Preservation Society Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner.** 112 N. Lake Park Blvd., Carolina Beach. Info: [info@federal-point-history.org](mailto:info@federal-point-history.org)

**Tuesday, December 17, 6 pm sharp – until. Burgwin-Wright House, 224 Market St., Wilmington. Cape Fear Revolutionary War Table Holiday Program.** “A splendid time is guaranteed for all” as refreshments are served and Exec. Dir. Christine Lamberton discusses Colonial Christmas. If not yet a member, you are most welcome to join at the door. Info: [CFRWRT@gmail.com](mailto:CFRWRT@gmail.com)

**Thursday, December 19 – Saturday, December 21, 5-8 pm nightly. Nights of Lights at the Bellamy Mansion.** A holiday walk-through experience at the lavishly decorated site. 503 Market St., Wilmington No charge; donations graciously received. Info: <https://www.bellamymansion.org/nights-of-lights.html>

**Sunday, December 22, 10:15 am. Christmas Pageant at St. James Episcopal Church.** 25 S. 3rd St., Wilmington. Come experience a moving retelling of the birth of Jesus by the youngest members of our town's oldest church (founded 1729). Info: <https://www.stjamesp.org/>



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## Opinion

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By Roman Berger

### **Take Your Children and Grandchildren to Civil War Sites!**

Recently, I had the opportunity to glance at a copy of *The Civil War Monitor* – specifically, Volume 14, No. 3. In the digital age, the unique nature of opening up a periodical is something to treasure; processing information put to paper might carry a certain weight not exactly found in information put onto the web. While glancing through to see what type of articles would be found in a magazine of this nature, I happened upon an infographic concerning the “Profile of a Civil War Traveler”, based on reader surveys (Pg. 12-13). And one statistic cited in that survey caught my eye – a stat that I took as somewhat concerning.

According to *The Civil War Monitor*, the average age for a first visit to a Civil War battlefield or a related site is 22 years old.

On one hand, the fact that people in their twenties are still exploring and studying battlefields in the most consequential war in this nation’s history, a war that was some generations separated from our daily lives, is surely heartening for us history enthusiasts. It speaks to the engagement that civilians have with the national story and the success of enthusiasts in keeping interest alive. But the fact that age is firmly in adulthood does make me wonder – how many adults are using their vacation time to explore this great nation of ours? In fact, given that older age, a more pressing question presents itself; should we find ways to get kids and teenagers to visit these battlefields at a formative age? And why?

It makes sense that families with sparse resources and vacation time would want to use it in more “exciting” locales – theme parks, beach cities, you name it. The memories from those trips last forever for all who undertake them, and a battlefield might be unfairly written off as “boring” to younger eyes at first glance, at least for those adults who might not have a vested interest in Civil War history.

But surely trips to explore the crucibles that this nation has been forged under are equally as important, with the battlefields and related sites in the Civil War being particularly pivotal. Gettysburg (which was cited in that same article as the most common “opening salvo” with an overwhelming majority at 52.8%) is a critical locale in the formation and maintenance of American society – you can arguably divide America in a “before Gettysburg” and “after Gettysburg” given the sheer tactical and emotional impact of that conflict. Here in Cape Fear, Fort Fisher’s capitulation served as the nail in the coffin for the Confederacy, which collapsed weeks later. Even smaller scale battlefields and historical sites can grant massive insight for younger viewers, as well as open undiscovered paths in their minds.



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## Opinion Cont.

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By Roman Berger

Historical sites and battlefields so often have technological artifacts used at the time of the conflict – surely, the weaponry and armory might encourage a young visitor to consider a STEM-focused career. The dedication of the nurses on the battlefield concerning the casualties might have some other visitors contemplate a career in the medical field, astonished at how far medical treatment has come from the field hospitals in Vicksburg and Antietam. And that’s beyond the philosophical rationale behind visiting these battlefields – understanding the issues that propelled the underlying conflict and the resulting battles, how military strategies influenced the endgame of the conflict’s outcome, the gravitas of giving your life for something beyond your self-interest.

But it’s pivotal for our national storytelling and our national development to encourage our youth to visit these battlefields. This is hallowed ground we are dealing with – so many of the Civil War dead are at eternal rest in these battlefields. My concern is that, without a lot of young people going to these sites, they will not only lose interest in our history, they will be quick to overlook the sobering nature of these pivotal sites in American history. Why do you think there is an interest in preserving these battlefields? Right now, as development proceeds – especially in the fast-growing modern South – there is cause for concern that Civil War battlefields, sites where brother warred against brother, could be swept aside by tract housing and chain stores.

It makes me wonder how we can put a stop to this encroachment before it starts, or at least, stop it before it reaches fever pitch. Parents and grandparents should take the initiative and take their children to pivotal sites in the Civil War. It should be treated with the same priority as a traditional summer vacation – what might seem a bit boring at first glance to young children could awaken in them a passion for preserving this nation’s history and related artifacts, if not other career interests.

Beyond that – given that not everybody in this country has the resources to do so – schools should include in their history curriculum trips to pivotal Civil War sites nearby. (Here, the newly renovated Fort Fisher Museum is surely a great opportunity for students across Cape Fear to visit a very epochal Civil War battleground.) Local libraries should also sponsor bus trips to these sites. We need community programs to entice young Americans and their families to visit these sites that so often set the stage for America’s contemporary state.

Our national history must be taught to and maintained by new voices. There is so much that one can extrapolate from a trip to a Civil War battlefield; so many paths can be opened, and by bringing a new generation to these sites, these paths can be open at the right time to shape lives in very dramatic ways.



*Roman Berger, a member of the CFCWRT Executive Committee, is the Audio-Visual Coordinator at the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table. A lifelong American History buff, he possesses a Bachelor of Arts in History from Stony Brook University.*



## Welcome to the Table, Sterling, Gold and Platinum Sponsors!

By Yelena Howell

We now have an additional membership category: sponsorship, with Sterling, Gold and Platinum options at \$50, \$100, and \$250 per year, respectively. In November 2024, an extra \$400 boosted our programming budget as our very first sponsors partnered with us in supporting our mission.

These fine companies offer top-notch services that may be of interest to our members. Corporate sponsorship of our Roundtable is by invitation extended to those whose work merits whole-hearted endorsement. Meanwhile, individuals also have the option to join or renew our memberships as Sterling, Gold or Platinum that includes personal or couples' membership along with advertising privileges and recognition. Sterling status is an additional \$20 per year as compared to our regular annual dues. CFCWRT thanks you for your support in any way that fits your preferences while respecting your numerous other financial and time commitments.

**Wilmington True History Tours** is the brainchild of Mr. & Mrs. Brandon Carter, Esq. In addition to his successful legal career, Brandon runs the most popular history tour company in Savannah, Georgia. (You guessed it: its name is Savannah True History Tours!) "Here, there and everywhere", he is renowned for his professionalism, customer care, and devotion to evidence-based history presented in a captivating manner. In Wilmington, Brandon collaborates with our very own Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr. and other highly experienced tour guides to deliver the best walking tours year-round. Tremendous thanks to Wilmington True History Tours for contributing to our local culture and economy and for their Sterling Sponsorship! You are invited to peruse and bookmark their webpage:  
<https://wilmingtontruelhistory.com/>

**Carolina Custom Closets**, a locally-owned and operated company specializing in the construction of custom storage and organization solutions, honored us with the gift of Gold Sponsorship! With over 20 years of experience, they serve the coastal Carolinas by designing and installing gorgeous custom shelving for closets, pantries, garages, offices, laundry rooms and more. You can see their work on their webpage: <https://www.carolinacustomclosets.com>

**Pickles & Taps**, to whom we offer a resounding thanks, stepped up as a Platinum Sponsor! More details about their business continues on the following page.

My personal thanks to each of you for embracing our new sponsorship category and to our benefactors for following along with us and for your gracious gifts. With due recognition of multitudes of worthy civic causes that merit financial support, I am truly grateful for sponsoring relationships with us that have been carefully considered and found worthwhile.

Please join me in patronizing these businesses as desired. Links to their contact information and offerings will be provided concisely and regularly in our group communications as a token of our appreciation and reciprocity. Questions and feedback: [CapeFearRT@gmail.com](mailto:CapeFearRT@gmail.com)





## Pickle & Taps: Supporting the CFCWRT & Serving Wilmington

By Matt Howell



We are thrilled to welcome *Pickle & Taps* as a Platinum Sponsor of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table! Jason and Kayse Beasley, the husband-and-wife team behind this exciting new venture, have shown incredible generosity in supporting our group at the highest sponsorship level. Their dedication to fostering community partnerships is as strong as their passion for pickleball.

Set to open in mid-December at the corner of 13th and Marsteller, *Pickle & Taps* is Wilmington's first indoor pickleball facility. With 10 indoor courts and a welcoming atmosphere, it is the perfect space for players of all levels to gather. Guests can enjoy not only great games but also beer, wine, and snacks in a comfortable, community-focused environment.

Jason and Kayse are eager to share their love of pickleball with the Wilmington community. They have created a space where both seasoned players and beginners can connect, grow, and have fun. The Beasleys encourage any pickleball enthusiasts in our membership to join them for a game or two when the facility opens.

Their mission is to grow the love of pickleball, support local businesses, strengthen community, and give back through charities. Their values reflect this commitment: do the right thing, grow, build, innovate, give back, and have fun.

We are proud to have *Pickle & Taps* as part of our Round Table family and look forward to supporting their mission to bring people together through the joy of pickleball. Let us show our gratitude by visiting their facility and spreading the word about this fantastic addition to Wilmington!



## Brunswick Civil War Round Table



We are pleased to announce that Union General Ulysses S. Grant will return, in person, to the Tuesday, December 3rd monthly meeting of the Round Table. His return engagement is by popular demand recalling his ZOOM presentation during COVID back in December, 2020 when he captivated his audience on a variety of true-life and entertaining subjects. His opinions about the Civil War cover a myriad of events and personal observations, raising our curiosity as to what he will decide to discuss this time during his visit.

Actually Gen. Grant is portrayed by Dr. E.C. (Curt) Fields, Jr., educational consultant and living historian. He will appear in his Union uniform and favorite cigar. This will be a program not to be missed given his deep respect and admiration for Grant.

In fact, he is a living replica of Grant with the same height and body type.

The meeting will be held at Hatch Auditorium on Caswell Beach. Everyone is welcome. Registration begins at 6:15PM. The program starts at 7:00PM. The visitor fee is \$10, and can be applied toward the \$25 annual membership dues which can include a spouse for all nine monthly meetings.

For more information, email president John Butler at [Brunswickcwrt@gmail.com](mailto:Brunswickcwrt@gmail.com) or call him at (404) 229-9425. Visit BCWRT online at <https://brunswickcivilwarroundtable.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcivilwarroundtable>





## Wreaths Across America December Update



Tremendous thanks to each of our supporters! CFCWRT has exceeded our annual goal of 50 wreaths. We are at 62! Our special gratitude to Kimberly Jordan (Mrs. William) and Mr. Bruce Patterson for tirelessly championing this patriotic cause year in and year out.

Join us on at 12 noon on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at the Wilmington National Cemetery, 2011 Market Street, to remember and honor our veterans through the laying of remembrance wreaths and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud.



Your support is dearly appreciated. Not only have you provided wreaths to cover 62 Christian military graves, but you have collectively contributed a rebate of  $\$5 \times 62 = \$310$  to our Roundtable's programming budget.

Photos by Yelena Howell, 2023.



# Cape Fear Civil War Round Table

## Executive Committee

President: **Yelena Howell**

Vice President: **Chris Langlois**

Secretary: **Fred Claridge**

Treasurer: **Mike McDonald**

Quartermaster: **William Jordan**

Programs: **position open**

Membership: **Kim Berger**

Audiovisual/Computer Support: **Roman Berger**

At Large: **Jim Gannon**

At Large: **Tom O'Connor**

At Large: **Al Turner**

Webmaster: **Richard Buggeln**

Editor: **Matthew Howell**

Immediate Past President & Publicity: **Bill Jayne**

## Advisors

**Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr.**, Professor Emeritus, Dept. of History, UNCW

**Mr. Jim McKee**, Site Manager, Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site

**Mr. Jim Steele**, Site Manager, Fort Fisher State Historic Site

**Dr. Angela Zombek**, Associate Professor of History, Dept. of History, UNCW

## Contact

[CapeFearRT@gmail.com](mailto:CapeFearRT@gmail.com)



# CFCWRT Lifetime Sponsors

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our strategic partners, whose generous support through discounts and services sustains the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table. Your ongoing contributions play an invaluable role in helping us preserve history, foster education, and connect our community. Thank you for standing with us in our mission!



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### Best Western Hotels & Resorts



### Cape Fear Seafood Company

Specializing in regional American seafood, signature dishes, hand cut fish, steaks and chicken along with freshly made desserts.

**New: a corporate membership adds your business or organization to our list of valued sponsors. Sterling (\$50), Gold (\$100), and Platinum (\$250) annual sponsorships are available. Contact [CapeFearRT@gmail.com](mailto:CapeFearRT@gmail.com) to join.**