

SECOND-GUESSING RICHARD EWELL

Wilmington's Cape Fear Civil War Round Table invites you to hear Professor Chris Mackowski's speak on the topic of "Second-Guessing Richard Ewell."

One of the main reasons the Civil War is so fascinating is that there were dozens of episodes that could have changed the course of history. One such event was the end of the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863.

General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had won a demoralizing victory over the Union Army at Chancellorsville, Virginia, in early May and promptly went on the offensive. It was a desperate gamble made even more perilous because Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson had been killed at Chancellorsville.

Taking Jackson's place was Richard S. Ewell, a successful commander under Jackson until he was wounded in August 1862. His wound resulted in the loss of a leg but less than a year later he was back and in command of one-third of Lee's army.

As Lee entered Pennsylvania, the Union army stayed between him and Washington, D.C. The armies clashed at Gettysburg on July 1 in a piecemeal engagement and as the day ended, the Ewell's Confederates faced a line of low hills and it seemed that if they seized the commanding terrain it would result in another great victory for the south.

Yet, General Ewell's forces remained at the foot of the hills. The next two days would see fighting on a monumental scale, ending in the Confederate failure and retreat back into Virginia.

General Ewell died in 1872 and his commander, Robert E. Lee, died in 1870. After that, the "Battle of the Books" featured generals on both sides providing their versions of history. Writers often sought to scapegoat others while enhancing their own reputations.

Chris Mackowski will guide us through this turning point, looking at what happened in 1863, what happened during the "Battle of the Books" and in contemporary times.

He is the editor of the "Emerging Civil War Series" of publications from Savas Beattie and a professor at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, NY. His Ph.D. is from Binghamton University in NY.

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table meets the second Thursday of every month. Enter at the front of the church through the entrance

marked "Worship Center." Doors open at 6:30 and the program starts around 7:15. Guests are welcome. Yearly membership is \$30.