



The official newsletter of the Cape Fear Civil War Roundtable

Cape Fear Civil War Round Table Highlights Bentonville Battlefield Update and “Myth of the Rifle Musket”

By Bill Jayne, CFCWRT President

The July 11 meeting of the Cape Fear Civil War Round Table (CFCWRT) features a presentation by Fred Claridge, our newsletter editor and an avid volunteer at the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site, and President Bill Jayne talking about the outsized reputation of the rifle musket as the cause of high casualties in the Civil War.

Many thanks to Matt Howell for taking the helm of The Runner during my unexpected medical misadventure last month. Matt did an outstanding job delivering the cargo to port despite taking over in a storm. Much appreciated Matt! - Editor -

The presentations are part of the group’s Members Forum series. Most Civil War Round Tables across the country take the summer off but Cape Fear relies on the interests and scholarship of its members to continue to present informative programs throughout the summer. Most of these programs are more interactive than the standard lecture format the round table relies on throughout most of the “campaign” year.

The Battle of Bentonville, fought March 19-21, 1865, was the last full-scale action of the Civil War in which a Confederate army was able to mount a tactical offensive. This major battle,

Membership Report

By Bruce Patterson
CFCWRT Secretary

We are pleased to announce the June membership of **Dan and Susan Hickman**. The Hickmans reside in Wilmington and are long-time residents following Dan's very successful military and academic careers. As students of history, especially local history, we are especially pleased when a long-time Wilmingtonian joins our ranks.

A word about membership renewal. Please check you name tag. It reflects your month for annual renewal. If your tag reflects July, then your renewal is due prior to July 31st. You may renew on-line or by mail by sending your renewal fee (\$30.) to **CFCWRT, 8387 East Highcroft NE, Leland, NC 28451**. Better still, just give a check to **Treasurer Mike McDonald** at the July meeting. Mike will also accept your credit card payment. Lots of options folks but let's keep our ranks full.

Lastly, a reminder that every member is s recruiter. Bring a friend or neighbor to the next meeting. Visitors usually join following attendance.

And - we are looking for someone to help out with our attendance duties. Please stay tuned for more information on that opportunity to help!

the largest ever fought in North Carolina, was the only significant attempt to defeat the large Union army of Gen. William T. Sherman during its march through the Carolinas in the spring of 1865.

The site in Johnston County is less than 90 miles from Wilmington and it is one of the most pristine of all Civil War battlefields in the country. The area around the battlefield has remained largely agricultural and rural and one sees the terrain where the battle was fought much as the soldiers would have seen it almost 160 years ago.

In 1929 Fred Olds, of the NC Hall of History (forerunner of today's North Carolina Museum of History), wrote of a springtime battlefield tour recently enjoyed in remote southeastern Johnston County. He was truly amazed by what he found.

"One of the best-preserved battle fields of the War between the States is that of Bentonville," Olds asserted, noting that the field "still reveals lines of entrenchments so perfectly preserved as to be startling. They reach for miles." Extensive ground cover and little new construction in the area had kept the battlefield relatively undisturbed. Marveling at the pristine field fortifications, then adorned with fragrant arbutus blossoms, Olds observed that "nature has in the years which have passed cared for them with infinite tenderness." As he toured "no end of rifle pits," probably along the Sam Howell Branch, he found them "as distinct and well preserved as if they had been dug but a few years ago. Time has stood very still in that once bloody area."

The state of North Carolina has acquired extensive portions of the battlefield and assisted by the National Park Service and the American Battlefield Trust, it has continued to locate and map battlefield fortifications and other features. Moreover, the park has in recent years been able to develop new interpretative trails to bring people closer to these features and to better understand the highly significant battle.

From the perspective of a dedicated volunteer who has seen many of these new developments reach fruition in the past two years, Fred Claridge will give us an update on this jewel of battlefield preservation.



Mower's Attack on the Confederate Left, East of Bentonville, March 21, 1865. Frank Leslie's Illustrated.

In a second Member Forum presentation, Bill Jayne will take a look at the impact of the rifle musket on Civil War combat. In the immediate buildup to the outbreak of war in 1861, the rifle musket had replaced the smoothbore musket as the standard infantry weapon. A “musket” is an individual long weapon loaded by the muzzle. The smoothbore musket common to America’s Revolutionary War through the War with Mexico, fired a round ball that was propelled by black powder down a long barrel that was smooth on the inside. Effective range of the weapon was less than 150 yards.

The rifle musket was still loaded by the muzzle in a painstaking process but “rifling,” (something like the ridges and groves of a bolt or screw) caused the projectile to spin and thus remain truer to its trajectory as it left the barrel of the weapon. This weapon, in general, was seen to have an effective range of about 500 yards.

“The prevailing view of this weapon has been that it revolutionized warfare because of its increased range. Participants and latter-day historians alike have assumed that because the rifle deepened the killing zone so much—from roughly 100 yards to about 500 yards—it produced significant results.” This quotation is from the Introduction to *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat: Reality and Myth*, by Earl J. Hess. Dr. Hess, Ph.D., is a retired professor of history at

Lincoln Memorial University in Harrowgate, Tennessee. He is a prolific author whose books have been published by several prestigious academic presses. A native of rural Missouri, Dr. Hess received his Ph.D. from Purdue University.



The problem with the prevailing wisdom, which tends to portray the American Civil War as “the first modern war,” largely because of the rifle musket, is that it has seldom been subjected to rigorous analysis. Dr. Hess and others have pointed out that several factors limited the effective range of the rifle musket. Chief among those factors was the exaggerated parabolic arc of the projectile. Civil War long arms fired a large projectile, more than half an inch in diameter, with a relatively small amount of propellant. So, the projectile didn’t travel in a more or less flat flight, it rose and then, as gravity took over, came back to earth. When the weapon was sighted at 300 yards, there were two killing zones: from zero to about 75 yards, and then from about 250 yards to 350 yards. Opposing soldiers in the middle were relatively safe. A well-trained rifleman could estimate the range and adjust his sights in order to hit a target at well over 300 yards. The problem was, very few Civil War riflemen were trained marksmen. As the war progressed, specialized skirmish and sniper units benefited from training and began to have an effect.

Was, then, the new-fangled rifle musket the cause of the high casualties in Civil War battles? Dr. Hess wrote: “At best, the rifle musket had an incremental effect on changing the nature of combat for a few selected functions on the battlefield, such as skirmishing and sniping. It did not revolutionize warfare.” Within ten years, the rifle musket was a museum piece, replaced by breech-loading rifles and then bolt-action, magazine-fed rifles that were tremendously more powerful, easy to operate and a recruit could learn to accurately aim the weapon in a week of training.

Perhaps more important, in terms of causing high casualties, was the lack of training of higher-ranking officers. Not one general, north or south, had ever commanded a field force of more than a regiment or two in combat; that is 1,000 to 2,000 men. By 1862, however, men with no relevant experience and precious little academic preparation, were commanding armies in the neighborhood of 100,000 men.

Make plans to come and participate in these discussions. As usual, the meeting will take place on Thursday evening, July 11, beginning at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30. As usual, the meeting will be held in Elebash Hall at the rear of St. John’s Episcopal Church 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. Bring a friend! See you there.

Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson Site Lecture Series in July



Join us at Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site for a guest lecture series that examines the construction and historical significance of Civil War era fortifications along the Carolina coast from a number of perspectives. **July 2, 9, and 23 6:00-8:00 PM. \$3 admission.**

Built atop the remnants of the colonial town, Brunswick, Fort Anderson protected the Cape Fear River and supply lines to Wilmington. Wilmington was a critical port for supply lines throughout the Confederacy and to General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in Petersburg and Richmond. Although originally named Fort St. Phillip after the colonial Anglican Church ruins within the fortress, the fort was renamed in honor of Brigadier General George Burgwyn Anderson who died after complications from injuries suffered at Antietam. Lieutenant Thomas Rowland led the construction of Fort St. Phillip, which began on March 24, 1862. The earthwork was nearly a mile long and ran from the Cape Fear River to Orton Pond.¹

Guest Speakers: Todd Rhoades, Paul Shivers, and Jim McKee

¹ Jessica Lee Thompson, "Fort Anderson (Confederate)," North Carolina History Project, accessed 18 June 2024, <https://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/fort-anderson-confederate/>; John G. Barrett, *Civil War in North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, reprint, 1995); *Carolina Comments*, Vol 57: No 3 (July 2009); North Carolina Historic Sites, "Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson: Overview," accessed 4 May 2010, <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/brunswick/main.htm#ftanderson>.

Area Historical Association Events

By Yelena Howell, Tours and Trips Committee

Friday, June 28 (6-9 pm, opening night) through July 20 (Monday-Saturday, 10 am-4 pm), Burgwin-Wright House, 224 Market St., Wilmington. Well-known local historian and artist David Allen Norris presents his exhibit “Walks in Wilmington: Glimpses of Nature and History.” Works of art in various media will be available for purchase. Info: (910) 762-0570

Thursday, July 4, 5 pm program start with fireworks at 9:05-9:25 pm. Wilmington’s Riverside Celebration of Independence Day. Details: <https://tinyurl.com/WNCJuly4>

Friday, July 5, 1-1:30 pm. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th St., Wilmington. **Public Tour of Boundless**, a sculpture by NC artist Stephen Hayes commemorating the United States Colored Troops and their fight for freedom. Free with museum admission. Cultural Curator Daniel Jones will lead this tour on **multiple other July dates as well**: <https://cameronartmuseum.org/events/> CAM: (910) 395-5999

Saturday, July 6, or Saturday, July 20, 8-9 pm. Latimer House Night Tour. 126 S. 3rd. St., Wilmington. Tickets are \$20: <https://tinyurl.com/Latimer24>

Saturday, July 6, 10 am-3 pm (drop-in). North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport. 204 E. Moore St., Southport. **Skippers Crew: Shell-abrate America!** Hands-on activities for the whole family. The first two hours are adapted for children with sensitivities. Free of charge; donations appreciated. Info: (910) 477-5151. **Additional topics on Wednesday, July 10, and Wednesday, July 24**: <https://tinyurl.com/SMaritime>

Thursday, July 11, 6:30 pm-until. Bellamy Mansion Museum, 503 Market St., Wilmington. **Summer Jazz Series: Darryll Murrill.** \$15-\$25, tickets only at the door. <https://tinyurl.com/BellJaz> Info: (910) 251-3700 or info@bellamymansion.org

Friday, July 12, 9-10:30 am, Burgwin-Wright House, 224 Market St., Wilmington. **Cape Fear Legends and Lore Walking Tour.** Tickets are \$20 + tax: (910) 762-0570

Saturday, July 13, 10 am-until. City of Raleigh Museum, 220 Fayetteville St. **Body and Soul: The Intimate Experience of Civil War Soldiers.** **Dr. James Broomall**, *The Good Death Undone: The Fate of North Carolinians at Gettysburg*, **Dr. Douglas Porter**, “*The Unholy Cause*”: *Religion and Dissent in Civil War Era North Carolina*, and **Wade Sokolsky**, *Raleigh's Confederate Hospitals, 1861-1865*. No cost to attend. <https://tinyurl.com/CWExperiences>

Tuesday, July 16, 7-8 pm. North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport, Community Building. 223 E. Bay St., Southport. “**NC 250: It’s Not 1976 Again!**” Historian LeRae Umfleet will discuss the upcoming semi-quincentennial of signing of the Declaration of Independence. <https://tinyurl.com/SMaritime> A helpful resource: <https://www.america250.nc.gov/>

Members Pat Garrow and William Jordan Bring History Alive

By H. W. Walker, Runner Special Correspondent

Inaugurating the seventh iteration of our Members Forum series, retired archaeologist and author, Pat Garrow, told the story of the “Galvanized Yankees,” blue on the outside, gray on the inside. Galvanization was a relatively new process in Civil War days but the process of dipping iron or steel in molten zinc was growing by leaps and bounds because the zinc retarded rust on the ferrous metals being increasingly used for ships, trains, building structures, bridges, etc. Pat’s presentation was punctuated by an intermission featuring member William Jordan reenacting the role of victualer and chef W.C. Pag, and wowing everyone with fantastic 19th Century treats like “French Salad,” a kind of chicken salad served on lettuce leaves. More than 40 members and friends enjoyed the meeting.

Pat’s presentation was based on his second “Galvanized” book. His first book, published by the University of Tennessee press, focused on Union soldiers who grasped the opportunity to escape from Confederate prison by serving in the Confederate army. Titled *Changing Sides*, the book looked at the phenomenon through the lens of the various units that were formed for limited military duty. The experiment was largely a failure as former Union soldiers tended to desert their Confederate units as soon as feasible. Such deserters gave Union generals valuable intelligence at the battle of Bentonville in early 1865.



His second book, *Gray to Blue*, will focus on the opposite phenomenon, Confederate POWs who used the opportunity to serve in U.S. Army units in order to escape prison. This volume is scheduled to be published

by the University of Tennessee Press in 2025. Pat also focused on the experience of Union units composed of white southerners from Confederate states who abandoned allegiance to the Confederacy.

Pat’s research revealed that 3,156 white men were enlisted within the state by the Union to serve in units such as the 1st and 2nd North Carolina Infantry regiments in the U.S. Army. More than 5,000 white men born in North Carolina enlisted elsewhere. In all, Pat told us, 8,191 white men born in North Carolina fought for the Union.

The 2nd NC (Union) was raised from November 1863 to February 1864 in northeastern North Carolina. The area was a Union enclave throughout the war and most of the territory was controlled by the Union. Union supporters in the far northeastern counties of the state were often called “Buffaloes,” but not all the men in the regiment came from those counties.

The men were generally a little older than those in most Union regiments, but enlistees were as young as 14. For more about these Union soldiers, see the nearby article by John Wetherington about his ancestor, Ruel Wetherington, who served in the 2nd N.C.

The 2nd N.C. had a very unfortunate history as one company was captured virtually en masse. In February 1864. Company F was assigned to defend a blockhouse at Beech Grove near New Bern and as the Confederate army under Gen. George Pickett operated in the area, it surrounded the blockhouse, and it was surrendered by a Union Lieutenant from the 132nd N.Y. who was in command.

As the prisoners were marched toward Kinston, Confederate soldiers in Pickett’s force recognized some members of the 2nd N.C. who had served in Confederate units earlier in the war. Some of them had deserted. Ultimately, 22 men were executed by the Confederates and the rest sent to prison camps. Only three of the captives survived the war, according to Pat’s research.

After the intermission to enjoy W.C. Pag’s repast, Pat completed his presentation noting that 28 Federal units contained “Galvanized Yankees.” Many other units were formed outright from Unionists in places like East Tennessee and Northern Alabama. The 28 units, however, contained soldiers who had first served in Confederate units. Many of them were recruited from Point Lookout prison located in Maryland where the Potomac River empties into Chesapeake Bay.

One of the units formed was the 1st U.S. Volunteer Infantry. Recruits were subjected to a medical examination but only about 10 percent were disqualified. Some 94 of the volunteers examined had scars from gunshot wounds. A plurality of the volunteers, 486, came from North Carolina. The unit served as guards in Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, and took part in raids in the Tidewater area, including Elizabeth City, N.C. Those raids, Pat added, “produced nothing but desertions.”

Because of the desertions and fears of Confederate executions if the men were captured, on August 8, 1864, the 1st U.S.V.I. was shipped west to Chicago. From there, the regiment was divided into two battalions and traveled further west. One battalion—named the Dimon Battalion for its commander—went all the way to Fort Rice in what is now North Dakota. They suffered from poor leadership and supply problems but they did fight against Sioux warriors and help protect settlements. Many died of illness and a fair number deserted. They were mustered out of service on November 7, 1865.

The other battalion, known as the Tamblyn Battalion because of its commander Col. William L.

Tamblyn, served in other locations in Minnesota and Dakota Territory. Its experience was similar to the other battalion, and many men deserted. Interestingly, one deserter was Wright Batchelor, an ancestor of Michael K. Brantley, who told us his story, "Reluctant Confederate," in November 2022. Bachelor deserted the battalion in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and walked all the way to Petersburg, Virginia, and somehow rejoined his old Confederate unit. The Tamblyn Battalion remained in service until the men were mustered out on May 21, 1866.

Pat summarized the service of the 1st USVI by noting that 195 men deserted, 121 died in service (only five as a result of enemy action) and 78 received medical discharges. Of the more than 1,000 who served in the regiment, 394 men did not complete their service.

Thanks to members Pat Garrow and William Jordan (assisted by wife Kim and son David) for an informative and enjoyable meeting.



The food was great at our June event. There was so much to choose from.

Bon Appetit



Ruel Wetherington (24 October 1824 – 1 February 1912)

By John Wetherington, CFCWRT Member

[Editor’s Note: We hope you enjoy this article on one of our member’s ancestors - Ruel Wetherington. We have included some of the archival documents he discovered throughout the article. We also humbly apologize for the text gremlins which prevented us from fixing a number of the paragraphs. They’re still quite readable - but have some strange spacing anomalies we were powerless to fix. Thanks for your patience!]

The recent lecture by Pat Garrow on “Galvanized Yankees” reminded me of the research I had done on my Great Grandfather, Ruel Wetherington.

In May of 1861, Ruel enlisted in Company F, of the 2nd Infantry Battalion, CSA. He enlisted in New Bern, NC, but was later discharged for medical reasons: The records state: “Discharged by order of Surgeon Courts July 9, 1861, at Camp Advance, NC, on account of physical disability.”

In April 1863, in Craven County, Ruel enlisted in Company B, 67th NC Infantry Regiment of the Confederate Army (Whitford’s Partisan Rangers).

Class	Date	Date of Discharge	Class	Date	Date of Discharge	Class	Date	Date of Discharge
	Dec 20 61	Mar 1907		Dec 1907				
	Dec 1907	July 1912		July 1912				

Union General Ambrose Burnside had captured New Bern in early 1862 and the Union held the city and much of the surrounding area for the remainder of the war. North Carolinians had always been ambivalent about the war. North Carolina was the last state to secede from the Union. Unionists, deserters, and opportunists in the occupied territories, seeing their chance, began enlisting in the Union army. Many were promised bounties ranging from \$100 to \$300,

most of which was never paid. They were promised their duties would be guarding Federal logistics and building fortifications, and that they would never be called away from their home county.

On January 13, 1864, Ruel Wetherington enlisted in Company F, Second North Carolina Union Volunteer Infantry of the Union Army at New Bern. (Not to be confused with the same company and regiment designation on the southern side.) About

NAME OF SOLDIER:					Wetherington, Ruel				
SERVICE:					Late rank, a. F. 1 Regt N. C. Inf				
TERM OF SERVICE:					Enlisted, 1 Discharged, 1				
DATE OF FILING	CLASS	APPLICATION NO.	LAW	CERTIFICATE NO.					
1864 Aug 25	Invalid	669 P 61	5	601524					
1912 Feb. 19	Widow	980, 837	2	742,510.					
	Minor								
ADDITIONAL SERVICES:					F + C 2 N. C. Inf				
REMARKS:									
Apr - 1864					Died Feb 1, 1864				

half of the 2nd NC were former Confederate soldiers. According to essays such as “Little Souled Mercenaries?” The Buffaloes of Eastern North Carolina during the Civil War by Judkin Jay Browning, published in the July 2000 issue of *The North Carolina Historical Review*, many had enlisted in local defense units to avoid harsh Confederate conscription practices, which often resulted in men being removed from their homes with no time to try to provide for their families.

Ruel was 35 years old. He was born and raised in the Tuscarora/Cove City region of Craven County, NC – about midway between Union held New Bern and Confederate held Kinston. On Jan 18th, 1864, part of the 2nd NC was sent to the “Masked Battery” at Beech Grove overlooking the Neuse River, near what is now called Bachelor's Creek – Ruel’s home ground. They joined fourteen men from the 132nd Reg’t, NY Infantry.

At this same time, Gen. R. E. Lee decided the time was ripe to re-capture New Bern and directed Gen. George Pickett in Kinston to accomplish it. Beech Grove on the Federal right flank, though concealed by darkness and heavy fog, came under attack. The men of North Carolina were not allowed to lead the Union troops to safety without orders, even though they were well acquainted with their home terrain. On Feb 2nd, 1864, the battery was immediately surrendered by Lt Leith of New York with not a man lost to battle.

As the Union prisoners were led back to Kinston (in their new blue uniforms), a member of Picket's troops recognized two of the former confederates. In the end, after three separate courts martial, twenty-seven of the captives from Beech Grove were charged with desertion. Twenty-six others were declared POWs and sent to prison camps, including Andersonville. Twenty-one of those charged were hanged in Kinston, with many of their wives and friends looking on. Among those hanged was Sergeant Jessie James Summerlin. His body was carried twenty miles to his wife Catherine Dail Summerlin by the sympathetic Sheriff.

Of the twenty-seven "Galvanized Yankees" captured at Beech Grove, only four survived to see the next month: The court martial board was reconvened in Goldsboro to consider the fate of the remaining men. Two of them were hanged. Two were sentenced to hard labor, and two men, George Hawkins and (my Great Grandfather) Ruel Wetherington, were sentenced to be branded on their left hips with the letter "D" four inches in length. In addition, each was ordered to have a five-foot-long chain and twelve-pound ball attached to his left ankle and to work at hard labor on government projects for the duration of the war.

The US Army General Hospital in Annapolis, MD, carried Ruel Wetherington on the roster of the 2nd NC Volunteers (Union) as 'absent' since April 12, 1864. The roster was contained in a Register of "enlisted men, rebel deserters, and refugees detained at Camp Distribution awaiting orders" to be transferred on Sept 18, 1864, from Alexandria, VA, to New Berne, and 'present' in the 2nd Reg't on Sept-Nov 1864.

He was transferred to the 1st NC Vols, Beaufort, NC, on Nov 30th, appearing on their rolls on Feb 27, 1865. It appears that Ruel Wetherington was exchanged by the Confederates sometime in mid 1864 and passed into U.S. control.

Catherine Dail Summerlin, whose husband, Sgt Summerlin, was hanged, married Ruel Wetherington on May 20, 1866, to be his second wife, of three. She applied for a Widow's Pension (based on the death of Sgt. Jesse J Summerlin) in August 1867. She died in October 1873, age 37.

Ruel married his third wife, my Great Grandmother, Sarah E Woods, in August 1880.



Sarah applied for an Invalid's Pension in August, 1888, and a Widow's Pension on Feb 19, 1912, stating Ruel was in F & C Company 2nd NC Inf, and F Co, 1st NC Inf. Ruel died in Tuscarora, NC, Feb 1, 1912, and was buried in Cove City, not far from Beech Grove. He never received the \$300 bounty, although it was carried as being owed on most of the reports.

As for why Ruel enlisted in the Union army: I assume 1) the local economy was very bad, 2) the Yankees were convenient, and 3) the people didn't want to join the Confederacy in late 1864. But that's a guess. And, \$300 was a LOT of money.

As for the chronology: Ruel was in the hospital in Annapolis/Baltimore (Hospital Muster Roll, Mar & Apr '64 of West's Bldg USA General Hospital, Baltimore, MD. Company Muster Roll, May & Jun '64, "Absent in Gen Hospital, Annapolis, since April 12, 1864") which was Yankee territory. There's a neighborhood in Annapolis called Parole, after Camp Parole, (I lived just a few miles from there) where prisoners were exchanged or paroled.

When he was transferred from Alexandria, VA, it was Union territory. Beaufort, NC was, of course, also Union territory-that's where Burnside came ashore in 1862 prior to his assault on New Bern.

At some point between Feb 2, and April 12, 1864, Ruel was exchanged between the US and Confederate armies. Company Muster Roll of Sept - Dec 1864, for Co C, 2nd NC show him 'present.' On Feb 27, 1865, he is transferred from 2nd NC to the 1st NC Inf Vols in Beaufort, NC.

Information gleaned from:

"General George Pickett and the Mass Execution," Dr. Donald E. Collins

Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of North Carolina 1863, National Archives, NARA M270, NARA M401

US Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, NARA M850

Historical Data Systems, Inc.; Duxbury, MA 02331; *American Civil War Research Database - North Carolina Troops 1861-65, A Roster*

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Diverse Audience Bonds over Juneteenth Observance at Wilmington National Cemetery

By Yelena Howell, CFCWRT Tours and Trips Committee

Freedom jubilation in Wilmington rises toward its 30th consecutive year since Abdul Rahman Shareef’s co-founding of the local Juneteenth Committee in 1995, with numerous community events spanning an annual week of remembrance and celebration. On June 17th, 2024, the incomparable Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle Jr. delivered the keynote address at the solemn gathering at the Wilmington National Cemetery to honor the legacy of the USCT, 500 of whom are interred there. A reverent assembly of community leaders and townspeople fellowshiped together, sacred and secular words of tribute to courage through difficult, proud chapters of American history were delivered, creating a sense of shared gratitude and hope.

As both our round table and the Wilmington Juneteenth Committee near the big 3-0, the pillars behind the lookalike Sanskrit symbol “om” come to mind: unity, thought, speech, and action. Stay in touch with the Juneteenth Committee here: <https://www.facebook.com/JuneteenthWilmington/>

Consider Cameron Art Museum’s ongoing, vibrant programming: <https://cameronartmuseum.org/events/> and brush on the Battle of Forks Road whose name and rediscovery we owe to Dr. Fonvielle: <https://www.chrisfonvielle.com/shop>



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