

HISTORY OF CAPE FEAR CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table (CFCWRT) was established in 1994 and first met at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington (UNCW). In October 1994, the first speaker was Chris Fonvielle, who later joined the faculty of UNCW. Professor Fonvielle, now retired, is the premier historian of the Lower Cape Fear from Colonial times through the Civil War. Our first president was George Slaton who led the organization until the year 2000.

Following George Slaton, Professor Fonvielle led the CFCWRT from 2000 through 2006. The meeting site changed from UNCW to St. John's Episcopal Church and then to St. Andrew's on the Sound Episcopal Church. Under the leadership of David Norris (2006-10) and Bob Cooke (2010 to 2018), the organization grew steadily and many nationally known speakers and authors spoke to the group as well as accomplished local historians.

From 1997 through 2005 the organization featured tours to locations such as Richmond and its vicinity, Sharpsburg, Md., and Spotsylvania County, Va. From 2006 through 2011 tours were shortened to locations in North Carolina that could be reached within a day rather than requiring overnight travel. Tours were discontinued in 2012 because of a lack of sufficient interest.

The CFCWRT is actively involved in supporting Fort Fisher and Fort Anderson, the NC Historical Sites in the area, as well as the NC Maritime Museum in Southport. We provided a substantial donation in 2020 that facilitated the establishment of the Joseph Ryder Lewis, Jr. historical park in Carolina Beach. The park preserves a portion of the "Sugar Loaf Line," a defensive fortification that ran from an arm of Masonboro Sound to the Sugar Loaf dune on the Cape Fear River.

In addition to nationally known speakers, the round table regularly features speakers from local state historical sites and the Latimer House, the museum of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, in Wilmington.

Beginning in 2018, the Round Table has presented a summer program featuring a seminar-style round table discussion on a specific topic

such as the failure of Confederate forces to attack the Union landing force before its assault on Fort Fisher. We have also featured tours of local sites for the general public and a members forum in which members present short programs (approximately 15 minutes) on specific topics of their choosing.

The Cape Fear Civil War Round Table (CFCWRT) is a non-profit organization made up of men and women who have a common interest in the history of the Civil War. The meetings include a speaker each month covering some aspect of the Civil War. This serves our purpose of encouraging education and research into the conflict.

The CFCWRT meets the second Thursday of each month beginning at 6:30 p.m. In addition to our monthly newsletter, *The Runner*, we host a website at <http://www.cfcwrt.org>, and a Facebook page. The newsletter is also distributed via email.

Bill Jayne
President, Cape Fear Civil War Round Table