

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

December 8, 2014
Our 166th Meeting



Volume 14
Number 12

<http://www.raleighcwrt.org>

December 8 Holiday Party at State Capitol To Feature Southern String Band

December features our annual holiday event at the Old State Capitol. This year, we will have “old time” music as well as the usual hors d’oeuvres, drinks, and desserts.



The evening’s entertainment will be provided by The Southern String Band, made up of a group of nine friends from Raleigh who enjoy playing old time string band music together.

The band currently comprises of Kurt Eichenberger (mandolin and fiddle), Becky McElroy (banjo), Anne Miller (fiddle), Vicky Montague (fiddle), Bob Peter (guitar), Charley Nelson (tenor guitar, tenor banjo, mandolin, and bass), Ron Raxter (bass), Wade Smith (fiddle), and Mike Southern (fiddle).

Join us for some holiday music, fun, and fellowship! Please bring a snack, dessert, or beverage to share.

For details on The Southern String Band, see <http://www.kearc.com/southernstringband/home.htm>.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Our annual holiday event will once again be held at the State Capitol building, across the street from our usual meeting place. The event also will begin earlier than usual, at 6:30.

~ Christmas, 1864 ~

The Civil War saw its fourth Christmas in 1864. The soldiers on both sides understandably yearned for their homes and families.



Harper's Weekly, Dec. 31, 1864, Edition

In his Christmas 1864 illustration for *Harper's Weekly*, Thomas Nast features President Lincoln inviting Confederate soldiers representing “the prodigal son” to a festive Union feast.



The Sesquicentennial



December 1864

Savannah Falls to Sherman!

On Dec. 22, Union Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman completed his 300-mile "March to the Sea" and captured the city of Savannah, Ga.

In a note sent to President Lincoln, Sherman wrote: "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton."



Sherman in Savannah

During his march through Georgia from Atlanta, Sherman employed a policy of "total war" aimed at bringing the conflict to the civilian population and undermining the South's will to fight. His soldiers destroyed farms and plantations, infrastructure, and other supplies or resources that could be used by the Confederate army. Sherman's troops, which were cut off from their own supply lines, met with relatively little resistance during their march through Georgia.

Lincoln responded to Sherman's note that he was "anxious, if not fearful" about the march across Georgia. "Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all yours," the President wrote Dec. 26.

Also in December 1864, Salmon P. Chase, former Secretary of the Treasury, was named the sixth Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. President Lincoln also called on Congress to reconsider the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery and asked for a tax increase to reduce the wartime debt.

Confederate Loss at Nashville

After his defeat at Franklin, Tenn., Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood continued to move his army toward Nashville, which was Union-occupied.

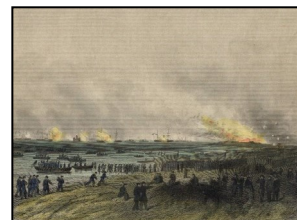


On Dec. 15, Union forces under Maj. Gen. George Thomas struck the right of the Confederate line. A few hours later, the Federals assaulted the left of the line as well. The Confederate left flank collapsed under similar attacks on Dec. 16, and Hood's army was forced to retreat.

The Battle of Nashville effectively destroyed the Confederate Army of Tennessee and Hood resigned his command after retreating to Mississippi.

Failed Assault on Ft. Fisher

On Dec. 23, Federal forces commanded by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler launched an assault on Fort Fisher, which guarded Wilmington, N.C., the South's last major seaport.



The Union navy began the attack by detonating a ship filled with powder, an attempt to destroy the fort that failed. Troops were then landed, but the land assault also was unsuccessful and the effort was scrapped by Butler on Dec. 27.

Medals Yanked!

In February 1862, Congress authorized the award of medals of honor to soldiers who distinguished themselves in battle.



In 1917, about one-third of the names honored with the medal were removed for not meeting the intended criteria. The vast majority removed (864 names) were from the 27th Maine, whose soldiers were awarded the medal for extending enlistments for four days during the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania in 1863. None of those men actually saw combat at Gettysburg.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 6: Fort Fisher in Kure Beach, N.C., presents a living history event on the first Federal attack on the fort in December 1864 titled "We Kept Our Courage Up." Free. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Camp life, artillery fire, drills. For more information, go to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher/fisher.htm> or phone (910) 458-5538.

Dec. 6: Bentonville Battlefield near Four Oaks, N.C., holds a Civil War Christmas living history event. Free. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Go online to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bentonvi/bentonvi.htm> or call (910) 594-0789 for more.

Dec. 6: Bennett Place in Durham, N.C., presents a Civil War Christmas living history event. Free. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For details, see <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bennett/bennett.htm> or call (919) 383-4345.

Dec. 9: Fort Fisher in Kure Beach, N.C., provides a holiday open house including Civil War period music and dance. Free. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 25 percent discount in museum shop. See <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher/fisher.htm> or call (910) 458-5538 for more information.

Dec. 13: The CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center in Kinston, N.C., holds a holiday open house focusing on how Civil War soldiers and sailors celebrated Christmas. Free. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For details, go online to <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/neuse/neuse.htm> or telephone (252) 522-2107.

A Holiday Gift Idea

A 2015 commemorative calendar covering the final year of the Civil War is available from eParks. The calendar includes illustrations and paintings that highlight the important battles and events of 1865.



The Petersburg campaign, Lincoln's assassination, fall of Richmond, and Confederate surrender at Appomattox are among the featured events. The 2015 calendar sells for \$8.95 plus shipping.

To order the commemorative calendar, go to <http://www.eparks.com/store/product/113663/Civil-War-150th-Anniversary-2015-Commemorative-Calendar>, or call (877) 628-7275.

Preservation News

The Civil War Trust is seeking to preserve critical ground at the Chancellorsville, Va. battlefield.



The land targeted for preservation is 479 acres that were the site of Stonewall Jackson's crucial assault on May 2, 1863.

The Trust's goal in this campaign is to raise \$495,000. Donations are matched at a 9.29:1 rate!

For details, go to <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/chancellorsville/chancellorsville-2014>.

News of the RCWRT



Upcoming RCWRT Meetings

2015

January: annual Ed Bearss event

February: Brenda McKean, The Home Front

March: Patrick Schroeder, Appomattox

April: Mark Bradley, End of the Civil War in NC

May: Lee Craig, Economics of the American Civil War

June: Will Hansen, research at Duke library

Have You Renewed?

Annual dues (\$30 individual or family; \$10 for teachers) should have been remitted in September for the next year. If you have not renewed, please either mail your check to:

Griff Bartlett, Treasurer
908 Kinsdale Drive
Raleigh, NC 27615-1117

or, bring your check or cash to the next meeting.

Tax-Exempt Donations

As 2014 comes to a close, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the RCWRT or our Gatton Fund. Each year, the Raleigh Civil War Round Table honors an individual who has distinguished themselves through their work or efforts related to the study of the Civil War through its T. Harry Gatton Award. The next award will be presented at our annual event with Ed Bearss in January.

Four New Members!

The RCWRT welcomes our newest members, Jack Hinson (Raleigh), Jerry Homer (Chapel Hill), John Speights (Raleigh), and Noah Trudeau (Washington, D.C.). If you know someone that is interested in the Civil War, bring them to a meeting and encourage them to join!



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RCWRT Score Card

Members	128
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The Raleigh Civil War Round Table was formed on March 12, 2001 and is a 501(c)(3) "tax exempt organization." We meet on the second Monday of most months at 7:00 pm, at the N.C. Museum of History, (5 Edenton St. across from the State Capitol). Members and guests are encouraged to meet for supper at K&W Cafeteria (511 Woodburn Rd, Cameron Village) at 5:15; and for further discussion at The Mellow Mushroom (Glenwood Avenue & Peace Street) after the meeting. Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$10 for teachers. Students are free. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20.