

# The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Our 263<sup>rd</sup> Issue



Volume 23  
Number 1

<http://www.raleighcwrt.org>

## January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Meeting Features Wade Sokolosky Speaking on the Topic Confederate Hospitals in North Carolina

A Very Happy New Year to You and Yours!



**Wade Sokolosky,**  
Col. U.S. Army (Ret.)

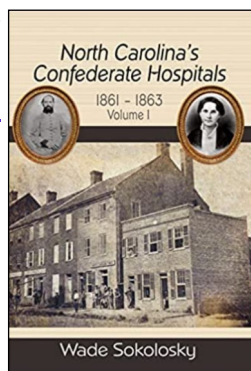
The Raleigh Civil War Round Table's January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in person/simultaneous Zoom meeting will feature Wade Sokolosky, Col. U.S. Army (Ret.), speaking on the topic **Confederate Hospitals in North Carolina**.

The meeting will be held at the NC Museum of History's Daniels Auditorium. Entrance is available from Edenton St., across from the State Capitol building. The wearing of a mask is optional.

Please join us at 6:30 p.m. EST for refreshments. The program starts at 7:00 p.m. This event will also be live-streamed on Zoom for those unable to attend in person. A video recording will be made available on <http://www.raleighcwrt.org>, our Raleigh Civil War Round Table website, following the event.

You should have already received an emailed invitation, including instructions and a link for joining online if you are unable to attend in person. Please send an email request to [RaleighCWRT@Yahoo.com](mailto:RaleighCWRT@Yahoo.com) if you have not yet received an invitation.

Wade's topic, **Confederate Hospitals in North Carolina**, is based on his recently published book **North Carolina's Confederate Hospitals, Vol. I: 1861-1863**. Available at Amazon.com and other book sellers, it is published by Fox Run Publishing (July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022). ISBN-10: 1945602236; ISBN-13: 978-1945602238.

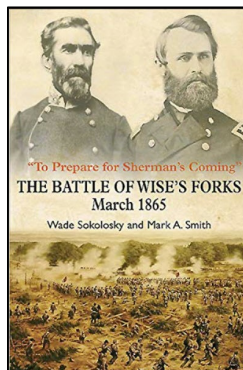


A native of Beaufort, NC, Wade is a graduate of East Carolina University and a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Army. He is one of North Carolina's leading experts of the 1865 Carolinas Campaign. Wade has

lectured throughout the country speaking to round tables, various societies and organizations, and at historical sites.

Most recently, Wade spoke at the June 2021 meeting of the Raleigh CWRT on the topic **Success and Failure in the Saddle: Mounted Operations during the 1865 Carolinas Campaign**.

Wade is the co-author (with Mark A. Smith) of the following two books:

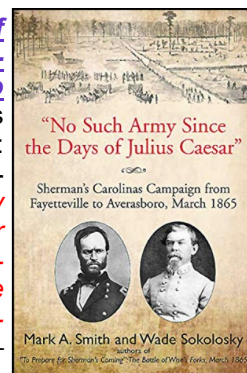


**"To Prepare for Sherman's Coming": The Battle of Wise's Forks, March 1865**, chosen as the winner of the Civil War Books and Authors Best Book of the Year for 2015, Battle/Campaign Histories - Eastern Theater category. Publisher: Savas Beatie; 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015); ISBN-10: 1611212669; ISBN-13: 978-1611212662. **"The clear and crisp writing, supplemented with original maps, photos, and wonderful research, means this book deserves a place on the bookshelf of any student**

**of the Carolinas Campaign."**—Eric J. Wittenberg, award-winning Civil War historian

**"No Such Army Since the Days of Julius Caesar": Sherman's Carolinas Campaign from Fayetteville to Aversboro.** Publisher: Savas Beatie (Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017); ISBN-10: 1611212863; ISBN-13: 978-1611212860.

**"Smith and Sokolosky are military historians with a particular interest in what happened in the Carolina States. What they bring to the table regarding Sherman and Johnston is remarkable, a revelation."** — Books Monthly



Wade is also the author of **Final Roll Call: Confederate Losses during the Carolinas Campaign**.

**(Continued→)**

Currently, Wade and author Eric Wittenberg are working on a book-length study of Sherman's military operations in South Carolina during the 1865 Carolinas Campaign.

Wade is the recipient of the Raleigh Civil War Round Table's 2017 *T. Harry Gattton Award* for his important efforts to study, preserve, and share the Civil War heritage of his native North Carolina. Additionally, he is a tour guide with the Friends of Bentonville Battlefield, and is a member of Brunswick County Civil War Round Table Advisory Council.

Wade lives in Beaufort, North Carolina and works for the N. C. Dept. of Transportation Ferry System.

~ o ~

## *Twenty-fourth Annual Appomattox Court House National Historical Park and Longwood University Free Civil War Seminar: Old Battlefields, New Parks*

The twenty-fourth annual Appomattox Court House National Historical Park and Longwood University free Civil War seminar will be held on Saturday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in Farmville, VA. The theme is *Old Battlefields, New Parks*. The following speakers and topics are featured:

**9:10 a.m.:** John Quarstein on *The First Battle: Big Bethel*

**10:15 a.m.:** Greg Mertz on *"Jackson Is With You!" Confederates Turn the Tide at Cedar Mountain*

**11:30 a.m.:** Daniel Davis on *"The Hottest Fire I Was Ever In: The Battle of Brandy Station"*

**12:30 p.m.:** Lunch

**1:45 p.m.:** Caroline Janney on *An End or Beginning: Lee's Army after Appomattox*

**2:45 p.m.:** Patrick A. Schroeder on *Forgotten Friday: April 7, 1865, Actions in Cumberland County, VA*

No reservations necessary. Signs will be posted on the Longwood University Campus. For directions to the campus go to <http://www.longwood.edu>. For more information contact Dr. David Coles at 434-395-2220 or Patrick Schroeder at 434-352-8987, Ext. 232.

Parking is available on Longwood University campus except in 24 hour reserved spaces, handicapped, or tow-away zones. Lunch is available at the Longwood University Dining Hall.

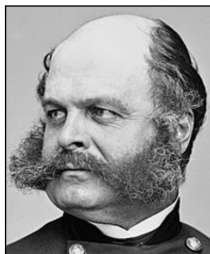
Longwood University requires masks to be worn in all public spaces on campus. This includes Jarman Auditorium and the dining hall.

A link to an information flyer on this event detailing the speakers' resumes and topics can be accessed from the related article on the Raleigh CWRT website, <http://www.raleighcwrt.org/>.

## *Did the Season of the Year Have an Effect on Number of Civil War Battles Fought?*

By Bob Graesser, Editor

This being the month of January, an idea dawned on this editor to investigate to what degree, if any, a season, or month within a season, played in determining the number of Civil War battles fought, given that roads in that era were unpaved. I could think of only one Civil War event off the top of my head that involved the month of January.

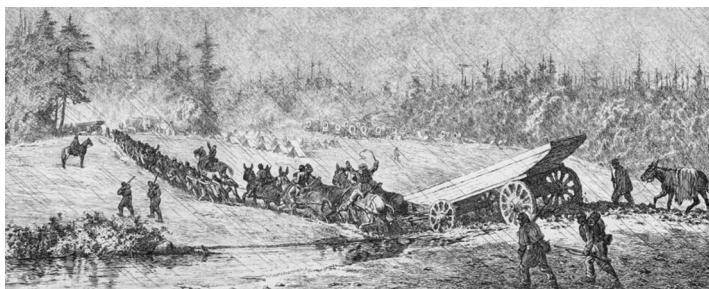


*Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside*

That event was Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's infamous "Mud March". Still smarting that his direct assault had received a shellacking at the hands of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Fredericksburg, VA on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 1862, Burnside relaunched his Army of the Potomac on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863, hoping to turn Lee's left flank by crossing the Rappahannock River further upstream. The move, although begun with dry conditions, quickly bogged down as several days of unseasonably warm weather coupled with heavy, unexpected rain first thawed the frozen roads of Virginia and then turned them into a muddy quagmire. The campaign had to be abandoned a few days later, and Burnside was summarily cashiered by President Lincoln.



*The Army of the Potomac's doomed winter campaign across the Rappahannock River would become known as the Mud March. Alfred Waud, Library of Congress*



*Supply wagons and pontoon bridging material, both critical for sustaining an army on the move, were lost in the mud. Edwin Forbes, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania St. University*

In the Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 issue of *The Knapsack*, this editor did an analysis of Civil War battles designated as "significant" by The Civil War Sites Advisory Commission



(CWSAC) in their 1993 *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*. The purpose of the commission was to prioritize the preservation and restoration of the nation's Civil War battle sites, which had fallen into grave danger, being demolished and bulldozed at an alarming rate.

To establish the scope of the problem, the CWSAC had first documented about 10,500 Civil War engagements, ranging from major battles to minor skirmishes in which at least one casualty occurred. A casualty is defined as a combatant having been wounded, killed, captured, or missing in combat.

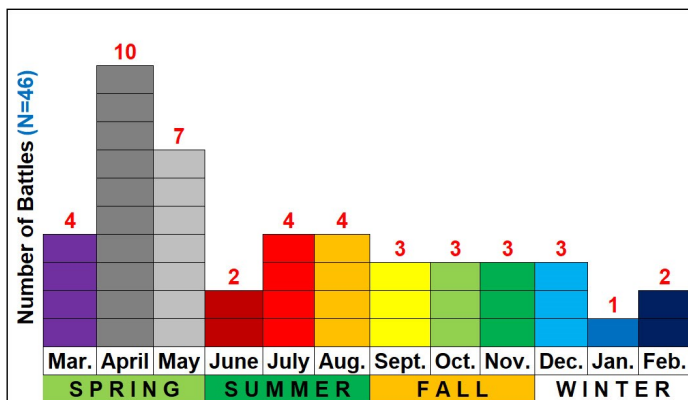
From this large list, the CWSAC defined 385 engagements as being "principal battles". This represented 3.7 percent of the total list. This smaller set was further segregated into four classifications, designated "A", "B", "C", and "D", according to their historic significance. Classes "A" and "B" were defined as "representing the principal strategic operations of the war" while classes "C" and "D" were defined as "usually representing operations with limited tactical objectives of enforcement and occupation."

More specifically, Class "A" battles were defined as "Decisive", meaning that they had a direct, observable impact on the direction, duration, conduct, or outcome of the war. Class "B" battles were defined as "Major", meaning that they had a direct, observable impact on the direction, duration, conduct, or outcome of a campaign.

In my original analysis, I broke the 385 principal battles down by state for all four classes, and sorted by total number of battles within each state. Among my findings, I found that Virginia had three times as many battles as any other state. This was to be expected since the Confederacy's capital, Richmond, was in Virginia, only 100 miles from the Union capital, Washington City.

In this current issue's analysis, I have taken the 46 "Decisive" battles of Class "A" and grouped them by the month, regardless of year, in which they occurred (or were initiated, if lasting more than one day). The results are shown below in *Histogram 1*.

**Histogram 1: "Decisive" (Cat. "A") Civil War Battles by Month, Regardless of Year**



Notice that Summer, Fall, and Winter all have a fairly consistent number of battles within each Season as

well as being fairly consistent across these Seasons. It is the Spring Season where both April and May have battle numbers much higher than those in the other Seasons.

Why is this, do you suppose, and is this difference statistically significant? If your eyes begin to glaze over in the following statistics-heavy discussion, simply skip down to the last line in red at the bottom of this page.

In statistics, one first forms the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), in this case that there is no difference among the number of battles across seasons. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) then states that at least one season differs significantly from the overall mean of the number of battles per season.

In order to perform statistical analysis on this data, the number of observations within a season should be replicated. To do this with the limited data at hand, we must assume that environmental conditions across the three months within each season are equivalent, thus allowing the use of each of the three months as a replicate. Looking at the histogram, this assumption appears plausible for Summer, Fall, and Winter. Spring, however, seems a bit sketchy.

This is a problem because for the statistics to be valid, the data must be normally distributed; that is, most of the data values should cluster around a central region and taper off as they go away from the center. This forms a so-called bell-shaped curve.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine if the differences in the averages of the number of battles across seasons reflect a real difference between the seasons, or is due to the random noise inside each season.

DATA SUMMARY				
Season	Months, i.e., Reps	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Spring	3	7.0000	3.0000	1.7321
Summer	3	3.3333	1.1547	0.6667
Fall	3	3.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Winter	3	2.0000	1.0000	0.5774

ANOVA SUMMARY					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Stat	p-Value
Between Groups	3	43.0001	14.3334	5.0588	0.0297
Within Groups	8	22.6667	2.8333		
Total:	11	65.6668			

The so-called F-statistic is the variation between the seasons divided by the variation within seasons. The larger the F-statistic, the greater the evidence that there is a difference in the number of battles between seasons. The calculated F-statistic for this analysis is 5.0588, a relatively large number.

To determine if the difference in the number of battles between seasons is statistically significant, we look at the so-called p-value that corresponds to the F-statistic. In this case the calculated p-value is 0.0297. At the 95% level of confidence ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), since the p-value is less than 0.05, **we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that**

there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the number of battles in the four seasons. And the season that sticks out like a sore thumb is Spring.

However, as Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) stated in his autobiography in an aphorism he attributed to British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli: "There are lies, damn lies, and statistics." When we examine the monthly components of Spring, we see that April is an outlier. Is this due to chance or is there some explanation that would torpedo the assertion that the sampling was taken from a homogeneous population, as is required if the statistics are to be valid?

The April replicate, in fact, did not come from a homogeneous population. First of all, it is the only month that is represented five times during the course of the Civil War as it bookended both the start and the end of the conflict. Secondly, four of the ten April battles occurred in a one-week period just prior to Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1865.

The point is that one must be wary when statistics are bandied about. While there is a definite April spike in number of battles, we have seen that this is heavily skewed by factors that the other months did not share. It does make sense, however, that there should be a spike in battle activity in April and May. As the old saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers." (Of course, with today's global warming, those bellwether dates have shifted earlier by a month or two!) With flowers also comes grass to serve as fodder for the horses, mules, and beeves on the hoof that accompany an army on the move. Spring planting would be wrapping up as well, with stragglers returning to the ranks. It's no coincidence that Gen. Grant kicked off his 1864 Overland Campaign on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

What about the original trigger to this screed? Why was only one decisive battle fought in the month of January over the course of the war? February is generally colder than January, so it doesn't seem due to the cold *per se*. Could it be due to the time and effort required by the military and political bureaucracy to ponder and then set into motion a new year's budgets, requisitions, and war strategies? Or was it, perhaps, due to melancholy and inertia setting in for those commanders fortunate enough to go on leave to spend the holidays with kith and kin? These are points to ponder as we, ourselves, enter the season of another Winter.

~ o ~

### Fort Fisher To Get a New Visitor Center

A new visitor center is coming to Fort Fisher State Historic Site in Kure Beach, NC. Nearly three times larger than its 1965 predecessor, the new center is expected to welcome more than a million visitors annually and will showcase museum exhibits detailing the fascinating history of the Civil War fort.

The Friends of Fort Fisher, Inc., the historic site's official support group, has been instrumental in coordinating and obtaining a sizable amount of funding from the

North Carolina state legislature. The project budget is around \$25.5 million, most of which has been appropriated over several years.

Plans are also in place to reconstruct a portion of Fort Fisher's earthen ramparts that were demolished during WW II for the construction of an airstrip. The Friends have launched a separate campaign to raise the \$3.5 million needed for their reconstruction.

Fort Fisher's land face originally extended nearly one half-mile from the Cape Fear River to the Atlantic Ocean. The planned reconstruction will replace segments of the earthworks that contained the fort's center sally port, which served as the main entrance to the fortifications.

Visitors to Fort Fisher will exit the visitor center and enter the fort proper through the reconstructed sally port tunnel. From there, they can enter a recreated ammunition magazine and go up to recreated gun chambers. These emplacements will house original Civil War 32-pounder cannons.

Once called the "Gibraltar of the South," Fort Fisher had a simple beginning, consisting of several sand batteries that mounted less than two dozen guns. But under the direction of Col. William Lamb, in July 1862, the fortress began to expand. With walls of earth and sand, the fort's sea face had 22 guns and its land face had 25 guns across its 15 mounds.

Until it finally fell to a combined sea-land attack on Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1865, it enabled Wilmington to remain the last open port with connections by rail to Richmond and Petersburg.



Digital rendering of the new visitor center design showing reconstructed earthworks and wooden palisade in the background



Digital rendering of the new visitor center design showing reconstructed cannon emplacements and underground ammunition magazines

# News of the RCWRT



## Upcoming 2023 RCWRT Meetings

The wearing of masks continues to be optional in the NC Museum of History, our monthly-meeting venue.

Date	Speaker(s)	Topic
Jan. 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Wade Sokolosky, Col. U.S. Army (Ret.)	Confederate Hospitals in North Carolina
Feb. 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Michael Briggs	Guilford County-made Confederate Rifles
Mar. 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Jim McKey	TBD
April 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Earl Ijames, B.A.	TBD
May 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Tonia Smith	Orton Williams
June 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Andrew Dupstadt, M.A.	Francis Lyell Hoge (CSS Neuse)
Jul. 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Harry Smeltzer, M.B.A.	The Battle of 1 <sup>st</sup> Manassas
Aug. 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Kevin Shroyer, B.S.	Virginians in Blue
Sept. 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	Rob Orrison, M.A.	The Battle of Bristoe Station
Oct. 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	TBD	TBD
Nov. 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	TBD	TBD
Dec. 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	TBD	TBD

### 2023: North Carolina Year of the Trail



On August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the North Carolina Legislature declared 2023 to be **Year of the Trail**, celebrating NC's vast network of trails, greenways, and blueways which showcase our diverse landscapes – grand mountain vistas, quiet rivers, vibrant urban greenways, coastal forests, and the rolling hills of the piedmont.

The move marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the North Carolina Trails System Act, and recognizes the role that hiking, biking, paddling, horseback-riding, and other trail-related activities play for locals and tourists alike. This will mark the largest statewide celebration of trails and outdoor recreation in NC history. For more information, visit <https://greattrailsonc.com/>.



## The Knapsack

is the official newsletter of the RCWRT and is published around the 1st of each month.

(December 2022 Circulation: 410)

### Staff

**Bob Graesser, Editor**

### Contributors

**Griff Bartlett**

**Readers are encouraged to submit photos, events, & articles for publication to Bob Graesser, Editor (RaleighCWRT@yahoo.com; 919-244-9041)**

## RCWRT Board of Directors (2022-24)

Name	Position
Charlie Knight	President / Program Committee
Griff Bartlett	Secretary / Treasurer
Bob Graesser	Knapsack Newsletter Editor / Webmaster
Ted Kunstling	Member / President Emeritus
Jessica Hoover	Member
Lynda Turbeville	Member

**Paying Memberships / Total Members: 99 / 119**

**No New Members Joined the RCWRT in Dec. 2022**

### The Straggler



*"Doubtless, the want of shoes, want of food, and physical exhaustion had kept many brave men from being with the army. But thousands of thieving poltroons had kept away from sheer cowardice. The straggler is generally a thief and always a coward, lost to all sense of shame; he can only be kept in ranks by a strict and sanguinary discipline."*

—Confederate Maj. Gen. D.H. Hill, in his official report on the Battle of Antietam. *"Had all our stragglers been up, McClellan's army would have been completely crushed."*

*Ed.: And what if McClellan had committed one or both of the two corps he held in reserve the entire battle?*

**The Raleigh Civil War Round Table** was formed on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and is a 501(c)(3) "tax exempt organization."

We meet on the second Monday of each month. Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$10 for teachers. Student membership is free. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20. Dues should be submitted to Griff Bartlett, Treasurer, 908 Kinsdale Drive, Raleigh, NC 27615-1117 by **Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>** each year.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK