

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

August 13, 2012
Our 138th Meeting



Volume 12
Number 8

Chris Meekins to Speak at August 13 Meeting On ‘Three Times a Traitor: Mayor Respass’

Alex Christopher Meekins, an archives and records professional at the North Carolina State Archives, will speak at the August 13 meeting of the Raleigh Civil War Round Table.

Chris’ presentation to the Round Table at this month’s meeting is titled: “Three Times a Traitor: Mayor Isaiah Respass and his Civil War Travails.”



Chris was born and raised in Elizabeth City, N.C. His interest in the history of our state grew out of the many opportunities he had to visit historic sites in northeastern North Carolina.

Chris earned his Bachelor of Arts (1995) and Masters degrees (2001) in history at North Carolina State University. The topic of his Master’s thesis was the Civil War in northeastern North Carolina, with a focus on events that took place in Elizabeth City.

In 2007, Chris’ thesis was published in book form as *Elizabeth City, North Carolina and the Civil War* and, in 2008, he had an article published in the *North Carolina Historical Review*.

Chris currently works as an archives and records professional at the North Carolina State Archives. He is responsible for answering inquiries made of the archives and manages its correspondence unit.

In addition, Chris belongs to the Southern Historical Association and is a member of the North Carolina Sesquicentennial Committee.



~ Mayor Isaiah Respass ~

Isaiah Respass, a typical ex-Whig, was elected as mayor of Washington, N.C., in 1860, just as the United States headed toward its civil war.



Mayor Respass

Respass, like many of his fellow North Carolinians, was caught between Union and Confederate policies and armed forces. He had shipping interests in the inter-coastal areas and provided Union General Ambrose Burnside with useful information related to the capture of Beaufort. He was charged with treason three times — once by the Confederates and twice by Union authorities.



The Sesquicentennial



August 1862

A Second Fight at Manassas!

From Aug. 28 through Aug. 30, Manassas, Va., would see its second major battle of the Civil War. Known in the North as the Second Battle of Bull Run, the clash was on a larger scale than the June 1861 Battle of Bull Run.

Having repulsed the advance of Union Maj. Gen. George McClellan's advance on Richmond, Gen. Robert E. Lee, recently appointed to command the Army of Northern Virginia (CSA), would order "Stonewall" Jackson's corps to suppress Federal forces in northern Virginia under the command of Maj. Gen. John Pope.

Following an indecisive fight between Jackson and Pope at Cedar Mountain on Aug. 9, Lee would send Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's corps to support the offensive effort.



After Jackson captured his depot in Manassas, Pope would assault the Confederate forces. The battle would see a series of uncoordinated attacks by Pope and, after a failed assault on Jackson by Union forces, Longstreet would smash the Federal's left wing. Only a heroic stand by Union troops on Chinn Ridge and, later, Henry Hill would prevent the Federal army from being destroyed.

Second Manassas was a decisive victory that would bring the Confederate army to the height of its power.

Of the approximately 62,000 Union troops engaged, about 10,000 were killed or wounded. Some 50,000 Confederate troops fought in the battle, and their casualties were estimated to be about 8,300.

At War With the Dakota

Suffering hunger and hardship, and reportedly angry about perceived treaty violations by the United States, a Dakota hunting party killed five settlers in southwestern Minnesota on Aug. 17. Later that same evening, a council of the Native American tribe decided to attack settlements throughout the area in an effort to take back the land.



The Siege of New Ulm, Minn.

Several months of fighting between the Dakota bands and settlers would ensue, with the U.S. Army also becoming involved. Known as the Dakota War of 1862, it would result in the deaths of 77 Federal soldiers, several hundred settlers, and nearly 200 Dakota Indians.

Enlistment of African-Americans

On Aug. 22, while occupying New Orleans, U.S. Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler issued an order (No. 63) authorizing the enlistment of "free Negroes." His order followed a call issued earlier in August by Gov. William Sprague of Rhode Island for blacks in that state to enlist.



The order called on former members of the 1st Louisiana Native Guards, a militia unit formed in April 1861 under Gov. Thomas Moore, to join with other free blacks in New Orleans in enlisting in the United States Army. The 1st Louisiana Native Guards (U.S.) would be mustered into service in September.

Clara Barton Museum Planned

A museum focusing on Clara Barton's efforts to find missing soldiers is planned for Washington, D.C. The museum will be housed in Barton's former Missing Soldiers Office on 7th Street, NW, and is to be operated by the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.



Barton worked as a nurse during the Civil War, and would found the American Red Cross. In 1865, she opened the office in D.C. to help families locate missing Union soldiers, and she and her staff would respond to more than 63,000 letters and determine the fate of more than 22,000 men. Barton's office is currently being restored and plans are to open a visitor center in late 2012 or early 2013.

For details, visit <http://www.civilwarmed.org/clara-barton-missing-soldiers-office>.

Upcoming Events

Aug. 11: The N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort, N.C., presents a free lecture by Dr. Robert Browning, the chief historian for the U.S. Coast Guard, on the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron during the Civil War. Event at 3 p.m. For details, call (252) 728-7317 or go to <http://www.ncmaritimemuseums.com/beaufort.html>.

Aug. 11: Fort Fisher Historic Site in Kure Beach, N.C., will hold a talk titled "Spies, Signals and Secrets: Civil War Communication and Fort Fisher." Free. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Telephone (910) 458-5538 or visit <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/fisher/fisher.htm>.

Aug. 11: The Kinston/Lenoir County Visitor Center in Kinston, N.C., presents "They Fought Like Demons," a lecture on female soldiers during the Civil War. 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, call (252) 522-2091 or email cssneuse@ncdcr.gov.

Sept. 8: The N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort, N.C., offers a presentation on North Carolina ironclads by East Carolina University professor Dr. William Still. Free event at 3 p.m. For details, telephone (252) 728-7317 or go to <http://www.ncmaritimemuseums.com/beaufort.html>.

Research Tool Available

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has made available a collection of materials related to Southern life during the Civil War that researchers and educators can access online.



"The Southern Homefront, 1861-1865" collection includes government documents, books, personal diaries, religious documents, and other materials and information. The collection's digitized materials may be browsed by topic or alphabetically.

Online access to the documents is available at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls>.

Preservation News

The Civil War Trust seeks to preserve 121 more acres at the Perryville battlefield in Kentucky. The targeted property includes the infamous "Slaughter Pen," the scene of intense violence.



During the October 2, 1862 battle, Confederate General Leonidas Polk barely escaped capture, but made it back to his lines and ordered a surprise attack that devastated the 22nd Indiana.

The Civil War Trust's goal in this campaign is to raise \$256,900. Donations are matched 3.28 to 1.

For details on the Trust's effort to save more of the Perryville battlefield, go to <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/perryville/perryville-2012>.

News of the RCWRT



Upcoming RCWRT Meetings

September: James Clark, Walt Whitman

October: Josh Howard, new NC casualty estimates

November: Chris Fonvielle, photo history of Ft. Fisher

December: Christmas party at State Capitol

January: Annual event with Ed Bearss

February: Lerae Umfleet, Wilmington race riots

March: Ernie Dollar, PTSD and war's end in NC

April: Marvin Nicholson, the African-American experience

May: Sandy Barnard, a private in the Irish Brigade

June: Stephen Wise, blockade running

July: Rick Walton, Raleigh's Pettigrew Hospital

August Business Meeting

During our August event, we will have a short business meeting to elect officers and directors for the next two years, per our bylaws. The current Board of Directors nominated the following individuals to serve on the eight-member board during the next term:

President: Ted Kunstling

Vice President: Griff Bartlett

Treasurer: David June

Director: Steve Savia (past president)

Director: Andrew Ballard

Director: Pat Ford

Director: George Mills

Director: Frank Ragsdale

Nominations also will be accepted from the floor. Thanks to all who served during the previous term. Nominees should be willing to serve.

Waller on TV, in Newspaper

Former RCWRT President David Waller will appear on public access television (TACC9, Kinston; <http://www.tacc9.com>) on Aug. 15. The two-part piece will be posted on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>). David will also be featured in a *Kinston Free Press* article that will be written the same day. He will speak on the importance of Civil War preservation efforts.



The Knapsack

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RCWRT Score Card

Members	110
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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) immediately after the meeting. Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$15 for students. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20.