

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table
The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

March 13th, 2023
Our 265th Issue



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March 13th, 2023, Meeting Features Jim McKee Speaking on the Topic *Abraham Lincoln and The Fort Anderson Flag: A Flag That Might Have Changed U.S. History*



Jim McKee

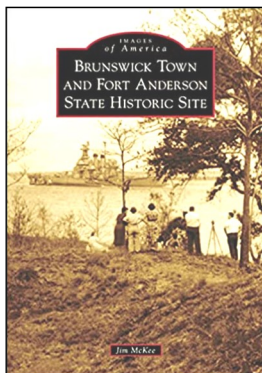
The Raleigh Civil War Round Table's March 13th, 2023, in person/simultaneous Zoom meeting will feature Jim McKee speaking on the topic *Abraham Lincoln and The Fort Anderson Flag: A Flag That Might Have Changed U.S. History*.

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 if you have not yet received an invitation.

Jim's topic, *Abraham Lincoln and The Fort Anderson Flag: A Flag That Might Have Changed U.S. History*, as covered in his book *Brunswick Town and Fort Anderson State Historic Site (Images of America)*, published by Arcadia Publishing Nov. 8th, 2021. ISBN-10: 146710776X; ISBN-13: 978-1467107761. Available at Amazon.com and other book sellers, it is published by NCRI-FLEBOOKS (July 30th, 2016). ISBN-10: 0986182621; ISBN-13: 978-0986182624.



The following biography of Jim McKee was gleaned

from an article posted in the *People* section of *Wilmington North Carolina Magazine*, July-August 2019, by Teresa McLamb.

Jim McKee grew up in the small North Carolina town of Clinton. The rural, agricultural area provided a backdrop for a myriad of activities: golf, sports, fishing, canoeing, and boating. His parents loved history. Born in Winston Salem, he was moved at six months old to Newport News, VA. As a child, it seemed that every weekend was spent in Williamsburg or Yorktown. Family vacations centered around a national park, historic site, museum, or something similar.

As a youth, McKee loved comic books but also relished reading history. Even the fictional books he read were historical fiction or alternate histories. As an undergraduate at Greensboro College, he was certain a knowledge of U.S. history would be required for his livelihood, but he found the classes he got the most out of were European and world history.

Upon graduation, McKee's career began as a ranger/interpreter with the National Parks Service in Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park. He helped operate two visitor centers, researched, guided tours and was introduced to archeology. The site includes four major battle fields where 100,000 soldiers fell and contains the bloodiest 12 square miles in North America.

McKee left the job after two years and went home to Southport, located on the coast in southeastern North Carolina, where the Cape Fear River meets the Atlantic Ocean. His parents moved there in 1988 while he was in college, so he had been in and out of town frequently. He settled there in 1992.

In March of 1992, 31 years ago this month, McKee happened to be walking by City Hall when he noticed workers digging up palm trees and replacing them with live oaks in preparation for the town's bicentennial celebration. He looked into one of the holes and saw that the diggers had

(Continued→)

uncovered a brick wall. Further digging revealed that it was colonial. McKee volunteered to excavate the area for no pay and ended up excavating the whole front lawn of City Hall from March to December of 1992.

It would be four years before McKee could definitively say what he found in the dig. Reviewing an inventory of items burned in 1775 when Fort Johnston was destroyed, he realized he had found the house of Captain Abraham Collet, the last British commander of Fort Johnston.

Eventually, McKee became director of a nonprofit called [Southport 2000](#) and later worked at the NC Maritime Museum in Southport. With [Southport 2000](#), he ran the visitors center, created and managed festivals, economic development, historic preservation and was Main Street manager.

When he started the job, 30% of the downtown space was vacant. Their database of visitors listed 150,000 individuals. One of the purposes of [Southport 2000](#) was to make it a destination. By the year 2000, occupancy was almost 100% in the business district and expanding, and the tourism database contained information on more than one million people.

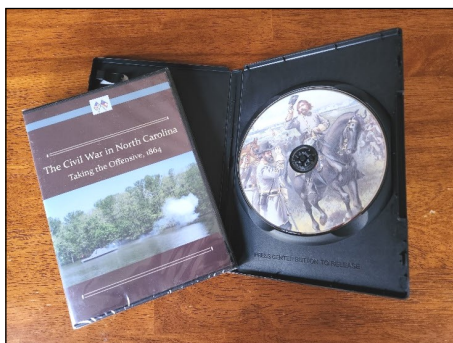
During the entire time, McKee's budget was never more than \$25,000, and his salary had to come out of that as well. McKee indicates he was never in it for the money. With every day holding the potential for a new discovery, McKee considers himself the richest person in the world.

About 30 years after obtaining his undergraduate degree, Jim earned an online M.A. degree from Southern New Hampshire University in 2016. Because his interests didn't match any of their existing programs, SNHU developed a custom degree just for him in U.S. military and public history. He pursued this degree not to further his career, already far along, but rather just for his own enlightenment and satisfaction, and to quench his thirst for knowledge.

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THIRD MEMBER-PRODUCED CIVIL WAR DOCUMENTARY FILM NOW AVAILABLE

Andrew Ballard, editor emeritus of [The Knapsack](#) newsletter, has just produced a companion DVD film to two earlier [documentaries](#) that the Raleigh Civil War Round Table previously released.



The Knapsack (Revised)

This latest documentary film, [The Civil War in North Carolina: Taking the Offensive, 1864](#), covers events that took place in our state that year including efforts by Maj. Gen. George Pickett to retake New Bern. The film features the following:

- James E. White III ([Batchelor's Creek / New Bern and USS Underwriter](#))
- Philip Gerard ([Kinston Hangings](#))
- Alex Christopher Meekins ([Battle of Plymouth](#))
- Andrew Dupstadt ([CSS Albemarle and Battle of Albemarle Sound](#)), and
- Chris Fonvielle ([Fort Fisher](#)).

It is narrated by S.N. Burkholder of Middletown, CT and filmed on site. It includes re-enactment footage along with historical maps and illustrations and period music.

DVDs of this film will be offered at our Mar. 13, 2023, meeting for donations of \$10 or more. Copies of [The Civil War in North Carolina: Battles for the Coast, 1862](#) and [The Civil War in North Carolina: The Final Campaigns, 1865](#) are also still available. As we have done with donations for the first two films, net proceeds from the third film will be used for preservation and conservation efforts related to the Civil War in North Carolina. Checks should be made out to [Raleigh CWRT](#).

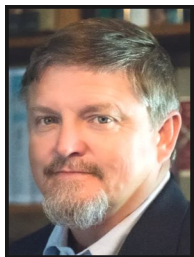
The first film, [The Civil War in North Carolina: The Final Campaigns, 1865](#), features historians and authors speaking on the major events of 1865 including the following:

- Ed Bearss ([Overview/Monroe's Crossroads](#))
- Chris Fonvielle ([Fort Fisher / Fort Anderson / Wilmington](#))
- David Waller ([Wyse Fork](#))
- Andrew Dupstadt ([CSS Neuse](#))
- Wade Sokolosky ([Averasboro](#))
- Mark Bradley ([Bentonville](#))
- Chris Hartley ([Stoneman's Raid](#))
- Ernest Dollar ([Raleigh / Morrisville](#))
- Bob Farrell ([Logan](#)), and
- John Guss ([Bennett Place](#))

The second film, [The Civil War in North Carolina: Battles for the Coast, 1862](#), covers events that took place in our state that year including the Burnside Expedition and Foster's Raid. The film features the following:

- Former National Park Service Ranger Michael Zatarga ([Roanoke Island, South Mills](#))
- Author James E. White III ([New Bern](#))
- N.C. State Park Ranger Paul R. Branch Jr. ([Fort Macon](#))
- Military Curator for the NC Museum of History Charles R. Knight ([Tranter's Creek](#)), and
- Founder of the Goldsborough Bridge Association Randy Sauls ([Foster's Raid / Kinston, White Hall, and Goldsborough Bridge](#)).

Wade Sokolosky to Lead Members of the Raleigh CWRT on a Tour of the Wyse Fork Battlefield



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

Wade Sokolosky, Col. U.S. Army (Ret.), will lead a tour of the Wyse Fork Battlefield on Saturday, April 29th, 2023. This tour is reserved specifically for members of the Raleigh Civil War Round Table, so please save the date by marking your calendar if you are interested in attending.

As the NC Dept. of Transportation is planning a Hwy 70 bypass of Kinston, NC which will impact important segments of the Wyse Fork Battlefield, if you wish to see the Battlefield in its current undisturbed condition, this would be a good opportunity to do so. Wade will point out the places potentially affected and explain the efforts to have the bypass diverted elsewhere.

Wade is a native of Beaufort, N.C., and graduated from East Carolina University. He is a 25-year U.S. Army veteran. Among the books he has authored or co-authored, Wade co-authored with Mark A. Smith the book [To Prepare for Sherman's Coming: The Battle of Wise's Forks, March 1865](#). He is the recipient of the Raleigh Civil War Round Table's 2017 T. Harry Garton Award for his important efforts to study, preserve, and share the Civil War heritage of his native North Carolina.

Details of the tour will be provided in *The Knapsack* newsletter for April 2023.

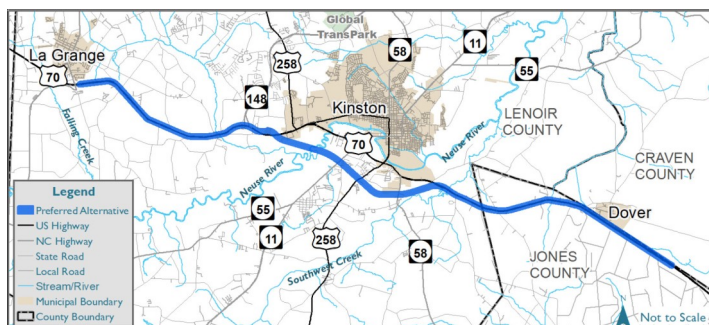
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Efforts to Save the Wyse Fork Battlefield from Destruction

The Wyse Fork Battlefield is endangered because of planned highway construction. The NC Dept of Transportation wants to run the new Hwy 70 Bypass with interchange through the heart of the battlefield where the heat of the battle took place. There is another route that could be used that is much cheaper and 0.2 miles shorter. Please help support a change in the route and the preservation of the Wyse Fork Battlefield.

Wade Sokolosky (see left) was a guest on Dr. Gerry Prokopowicz's podcast *The Civil War Talk Radio Companion* on Oct. 26th, 2022. The podcast, No. 1908, is entitled *Save Wyse Fork Battlefield*. It can be heard by clicking <http://cdn.voiceamerica.com/voice/201034/prokopowicz102622.mp3>.

For a detailed article on preserving the Wyse Fork Battlefield by Jane Phillips of Neuse News, click <https://www.neusenews.com/index/2022/6/14/wyse-fork-battlefield-preservation-needs-your-support>.

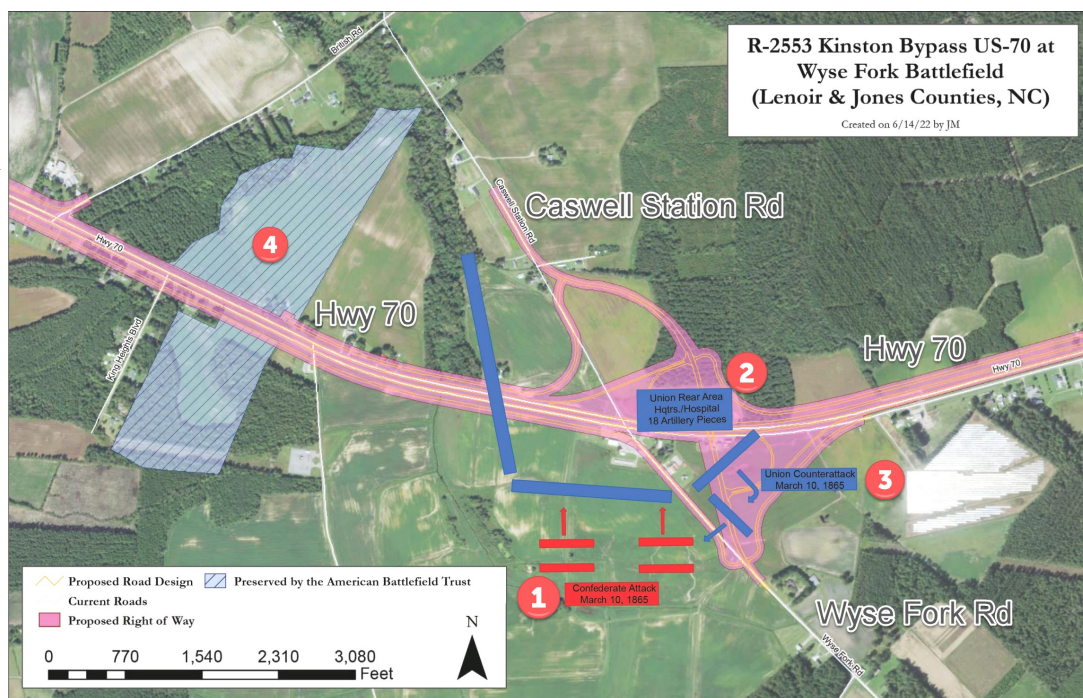


The proposed Kinston Hwy 70 Bypass would be a four-lane, median divided freeway that extends 22 miles from La Grange to Dover, cutting right through the heart of the Battlefield.

How the Currently Proposed Kinston Hwy 70 Bypass Would Impact the Wyse Fork Battlefield

That portion of the Kinston Hwy 70 Bypass shown in pink affects the heart of the Wyse Fork Battlefield where the heat of the battle took place.

- (1) Confederate Attack March 10, 1865
- (2) Union Rear Area Headquarters / Hospital, 18 Artillery Pieces
- (3) Union Counterattack March 10, 1865
- (4) That part of the Battlefield Preserved by the American Battlefield Trust. Note that it would be cut in half.



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
Mar. 13 th , 2023	Jim McKey	Abraham Lincoln and the Fort Anderson Flag: A Flag That Might Have Changed U.S. History
April 10 th , 2023	Earl Ijames, B.A.	TBD
May 8 th , 2023	Tonia Smith	Orton Williams
June 12 th , 2023	Andrew Duppstadt, M.A.	Francis Lyell Hoge (CSS Neuse)
Jul. 10 th , 2023	Harry Smeltzer, M.B.A.	The Battle of 1 st Manassas
Aug. 14 th , 2023	Kevin Shroyer, B.S.	Virginians in Blue
Sept. 11 th , 2023	Rob Orrison, M.A.	The Battle of Bristoe Station

Images Related to the Battle of Wyse Fork



The Cobb House, across from Wyse Fork Battlefield Tour Stop 3, was used as a headquarters and then as a field hospital. It is threatened by the NCDOT Hwy 70 Bypass project.



Surrender of the 15th Connecticut, a painting by Stephen McCall, depicts the surrender of most of the Union regiment. However, included in that capture were some soldiers from the 27th Massachusetts as well.



The Knapsack

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Staff

Bob Graesser, Editor

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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: 104 / 124

We welcome one new member who joined the RCWRT in Feb. 2023: Gary Evans of Cary, NC

Raleigh CWRT YouTube Channel Launched

Andrew Ballard, *The Knapsack* newsletter editor emeritus, has launched a YouTube channel on behalf of the Raleigh CWRT. Among a number of other videos, it currently contains all of the videos from his documentary film *The Civil War in North Carolina: The Final Campaigns, 1865*, which features historians and authors speaking on the major NC events of 1865. Two teasers from Andrew's new third DVD film, *The Civil War in North Carolina: Taking the Offensive, 1864*, are also included.

Here is the link to the RCWRT YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/>

The Raleigh Civil War Round Table was formed on March 12th, 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. 15th** each year.