

The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

April 10th, 2023
Our 266th Issue



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April 10th, 2023, Meeting Features Earl Ijames, B.A., Speaking on the Topic *Juneteenth*



Earl Ijames

The Raleigh Civil War Round Table's April 10th, 2023, in person/simultaneous Zoom meeting will feature Earl Ijames, B.A., speaking on the topic *Juneteenth*.

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.raleighcwr.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.

Historian Earl L. Ijames is curator of African American history at the NC Museum of History and has many years' experience working in the NC Office of Archives and History. He is also a long-time farmer, and he and his wife moved a Victorian ranch house from Zebulon, NC to Wendell, NC.

Juneteenth Flag Symbols

From an article by CNN staffer Harmeet Kaur on June 17th, 2022.

Juneteenth commemorates the day, June 19th, 1865, that Union Army Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas, and told enslaved African Americans of their emancipation.

In 1997, activist Ben Haith, founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation (NJCF), created a

commemorative flag with the help of collaborators, and Boston-based illustrator Lisa Jeanne Graf brought their vision to life. The flag was revised in 2000 into the version we know today. The date **June 19, 1865**, was added in 2007.



The Star: The white star in the center of the flag has a dual meaning. First, it represents Texas, the Lone Star State, where in Galveston on June 19th, 1865, Union soldiers informed the country's last remaining enslaved people

that, under the Emancipation Proclamation issued two years earlier, they were free. But the star also represents the freedom of African Americans in all 50 states.

The Burst: The bursting outline around the star is inspired by a nova, a term that astronomers use to mean a new star. On the Juneteenth flag, this represents a new beginning for the African Americans of Galveston and throughout the land.

The Arc: The curve that extends across the width of the flag represents a new horizon: the opportunities and promise that lay ahead for black Americans.

The Colors: The red, white and blue represents the American flag, a reminder that slaves and their descendants were and are Americans.

It is important to note, however, that while Juneteenth is celebrated as the end of slavery in the United States, it would take several more months to legally enforce it. Slavery was not formally abolished until Dec. 6th, 1865 with the passage of the 13th Amendment, which freed enslaved people in Union territory.

Today, Juneteenth is recognized as a day of liberation, as a commemoration of the end of chattel slavery in the United States. It has evolved into a way to pay homage to ancestors and celebrate Black culture, liberation, and the achievements of Black Americans.



RALEIGH CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE FIELD TRIP Saturday, April 29, 2023

WYSE FORK BATTLEFIELD, KINSTON N.C.

Led by Col. Wade Sokolowsky (Ret.), author of *“To Prepare for Sherman’s Army”: The Battle of Wise’s Forks*

SCHEDULE

- 0730 – Depart Raleigh Museum of History parking lot. Arrive early to organize car-pooling.
- 0900 – Rally at Kinston–Lenoir County Visitor & Information Center
101 E. New Bern Avenue (US 70E) parking lot (behind the Center)
- 0900 – 1230 – Guided tour of Wyse Fork Battlefield
- 1230 – 1330 – lunch at King’s BBQ
- 1400 – Visit CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center
100 N. Queen Street, Kinston (\$5 admission)
- 1500 – Visit CSS *Neuse II*
118 N. Hermitage Street, Kinston
- 1530 – Depart for Raleigh
- 1700 – Arrive at Raleigh

Guests are welcome to attend. Those who wish to travel independently may join group at Kinston – Lenoir County Visitors’ Center. Depending on interest, a tour bus may be arranged in Kinston at no cost except a tip for the driver.

VERY IMPORTANT: Notify Ted Kunstling (trkunstling@aol.com) if you would like to participate, if you are bringing a guest, and if you choose to meet in Raleigh or if driving separately, in Kinston.

TRK 3/31/2023

Thomas' Legion and A Matter of Karma



Confed. Col. William H. Thomas

Confederate Col. William H. Thomas, who began trading with the Cherokee at age sixteen, was the first and only white man to serve as a Cherokee chief, and was an influential figure in antebellum western NC.

He represented the Cherokee in Raleigh and in Washington City. There, he helped establish the NC reservation for the Eastern Band of Cherokee based on earlier treaties. This group was thus spared the hardship and grief that the other bands of the eastern Cherokee endured on their forced march along the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory in what was to become Oklahoma.

During the Civil War, Thomas organized his eponymous Legion of Cherokee Indians and Mountaineers in Knoxville, TN on Sept. 27th, 1862. He eventually recruited more than 2,000 officers and men, including two companies composed of 400 Cherokee.

His unit fought in TN, KY, and VA, and largely prevented the Federal occupation of western NC. In fact, his unit was also known as the 69th NC Regiment. Part of the Legion served in the final engagement of the war in NC at Waynesville on May 6th to 7th, 1865. He surrendered the Legion to Union Col. William C. Bartlett on May 9th, 1865.

The land and people around Winchester, VA were subjected to battles during 1862, 1863, and 1864. The Third Battle of Winchester occurred on Sept. 19th, 1864. Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan of the Union clashed with Confederate Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early's smaller force, resulting in a victory for the Union after Early and his men were forced to retreat. The Third Battle of Winchester was the bloodiest engagement in the Shenandoah Valley, with at least 8,000 casualties on both sides.

The Cherokee contingent from Thomas' Legion fought alongside the Confederate forces at Winchester and suffered grave losses after Brig. Gen. George A. Custer surrounded them during the fighting. It is ironic that Custer and his men of the 7th U.S. Cavalry Regiment would suffer an even worse fate 12 years later at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana Territory.



Cherokee veterans of Thomas' Legion at a 1903 Reunion in New Orleans

Why the Battles of Wyse Fork and Bentonville are Labeled as Western Theater

The American Battlefield Trust has recently made a call for donations to save and preserve 343 acres of tracts in five crucial battlefields in four Western Theater states. They are, in chronological order: Shiloh (TN), Chickamauga (GA), Brice's Cross Roads (MS), Wyse Fork (NC), and Bentonville (NC). (See the article on p. 4 in which the American Battlefield Trust calls for donations to help preserve these five battlefields in four states.)

A question immediately arises: why are the battles of Wyse Fork, aka the Battle of Kinston, and Bentonville included in the above list? After all, they're in North Carolina, an Eastern Theater state. The answer is that the opposing forces in both battles, at this late stage in the Civil War, were each represented by Western Theater armies.

During Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign in 1864, his Army Group had been composed of three Western Theater armies named after rivers: the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland, and the Army of the Ohio. After the fall of Atlanta in Sept., Sherman sent the Army of the Ohio and the IV Corps of the Army of the Cumberland, both under Union Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, north to deal with the remnants of Confederate Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood's western Army of Tennessee (named for the state).

Then, in Nov. 1864, Sherman created the Army of Georgia by combining the remaining XIV Corps and the XX Corps of the Army of the Cumberland. This new army, placed under the command of Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum of the XX Corps, served as the left wing in Sherman's March to the Sea.

This Army of Georgia was involved in little fighting during the March to the Sea but, during Sherman's Carolinas Campaign, again as the left wing, was engaged in the Battle of Averasborough (NC) and bore the brunt of the fighting in the Battle of Bentonville (NC).

The Union Army of the Tennessee, consisting of the XV and XVII Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, served as the right wing in both the March to the Sea and in the Carolinas Campaign.

The primary Confederate force in the Carolinas was the battered western Army of Tennessee, once again under the command of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, who had lost it for his nonaggressive actions in front of Atlanta the previous summer. Johnston had regained his leadership position after his replacement, Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood, was too aggressive and had virtually wrecked the Army of Tennessee in ill-conceived offensive disasters in front of Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee, in the fall of 1864.

Finally, in the Battle of Wyse Fork, March 7–10, 1865, a battle won by the Union, the Confederates were led by Gen. Braxton Bragg of the Department of North Carolina. He was reinforced by Maj. Gen. D.H. Hill's Division of the Army of Tennessee. Opposing Hill was Union Maj. Gen. Jacob D. Cox's Division of the XXIII Corps under Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield's Army of the Ohio.

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
April 10 th , 2023	Earl Ijames, B.A.	Juneteenth
May 8 th , 2023	Tonia Smith	Orton Williams
June 12 th , 2023	Andrew Dupstadt, 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

North Carolina Naval History in the Age of Sail and Steam Symposium

Join the Friends of the CSS Neuse Museum for their Naval History in the Age of Sail and Steam Symposium in June 2023!

This conference will be held in Kinston, NC on Friday and Saturday, June 23rd and 24th. Friday evening will have a dinner and keynote speaker, Hampton Newsome, at the CSS Neuse Museum. The program on Saturday will be held in Briley Auditorium on the campus of Lenoir Community College.

Ticket prices are \$50 (full registration), \$35 (Friday night only), and \$30 (Saturday only).

Link to Symposium details, registration, and to purchase tickets: <https://one.bidpal.net/navalsymposium>.

Of the six presentations, three relate to the Civil War:

The Friday evening dinner speaker is Hampton Newsome on *The Battle of Plymouth and the Civil War in Eastern North Carolina, Spring 1864*.

Saturday afternoon speakers include: Becky Sawyer on *"It is the Most Grand, Sublime Scene I Ever Could Think of Seeing:" The Letters of Sidney Stockbridge, Clerk in the Paymaster's Office, USS Pawtuxet. 1864-1865*, and Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr. on *The Exploits of US Naval Officer William B. Cushing*.

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The Knapsack

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Readers are encouraged to submit photos, events, & articles for publication to Bob Graesser, Editor
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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 added no new members to the RCWRT in March.

Help Preserve Five Battlefields in Four States

The American Battlefield Trust is asking for your help in saving 343 acres of hallowed ground with a historic \$18-to-\$1 match. These five tracts are at Shiloh (TN), Chickamauga (GA), Brice's Crossroads (MS), Wyse Fork (NC), and Bentonville (NC). Many of these acres are astonishingly well-preserved, but also urgently threatened.

There are critical deadlines to make all of this possible. That's why if you can make a gift of \$54 or more in the next month, you will receive a free copy of American Battlefield Trust's [Battle Maps of the Civil War: The Western Theater](#), a \$19 value if purchased at Amazon.com.

To donate, click [here](#), or go to <https://www.battlefields.org/give/save-battlefields>, and click on the lower-left section.

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.