



WALLY RUECKEL

Wallace "Wally" Rueckel, was born 1944 in Columbus Ohio and has lived in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and currently (Brunswick County) NC, for the last 11 years. He graduated from Ohio State with a BS in business in 1965, University of Wisconsin with an MBA in 1967, and attended Harvard PMD in 1974. His wife Nancy and he have been happily married for 52 years. Wally has worked for Cummins Engine Co, Sundstrand Corp, Guardian Industries, Hartmarx Corp, and Questor Management Co. His business career has been focused on finance, administration, program management and private equity. He retired 2016.

His Civil War interest began in 1991 when he first attended a Civil War Round Table in the suburbs of Detroit and heard Gordon Rhea speak about the Battle of the Wilderness. He was hooked and began extensive reading and taking guided civil war tours. After moving to Chicago area in late 1990's, Wally started attending the Chicago CWRT at the Union League Club further expanding his CWRT experience. He has since toured most Civil War sites with many of the well-known guides.

In 2009 Wally entered the next phase of his Civil War journey. In December, he was introduced to Tom O'Donnell, a Civil War fan par-excellence. They were always talking about the Civil War, taking guided tours together and attending some of the CWRT meetings in the area. In early 2010, he and Tom decided to launch a CWRT in Southport NC, a town of 5,000 residents. They talked to the local leaders of various history groups and others to get their input. They filed incorporation papers in Brunswick County NC and held their first meeting May 2010.

The first couple of meetings were nail-biters, but they recruited a core group of qualified volunteers, both male and female, to take leadership roles such as business, finance, media, communication, and local educators with great speaker contacts. Tom became the first President, but unfortunately, he passed away shortly after and Wally became president. He retired as President in December 2015 and is now an advisor to the Board. In 7 years, the BCWRT has grown to approximately 1200 member with over one-third women.