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2002 SCWRT Officers:

Paul Ruud, President
(530) 886-8806
pruud1@quiknet.com

Kit Knight, Vice-President
(916) 721-1827

Walt Bittle, Secretary
(916) 722-2552
waltb50@surewest.net

George Foxworth, Treasurer
(916) 362-0178

Bob Williams,
Member-at-Large
(916) 487-8144
rmwilms@mindspring.com

Jim Armstrong
Member-at-Large
(916) 457-7258

Bernardo Buenrostro,
Webmaster,
(916) 362-9837
bernbb@ix.netcom.com

Jim Middleton,
Editor
(916) 363-8112
BattleCryEditor@aol.com

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The Battle Cry

February 2002

Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
Founded 1961, <http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



President's Message

I really liked the feel of our January meeting! The air was filled with energy and excitement...and that was even before Fred Bohmfalk's excellent presentation on General US Grant. When it comes to the battlefield, I really admire the "bulldog" in Grant – that tenacity and persistence that always said forward in spite of easier alternatives. A big thank you to Fred for adding to our understanding of the personal side of US Grant.

What is happening in February? I announced at our last meeting that our colleague who makes appearances as General Lee had had to withdraw from our visit for medical reasons. We surely wish Jim Marsh a speedy recovery and hope to re-schedule him at our Round Table in the future. We have been able to arrange an exciting substitute so don't change your plans. **We will have our regular meeting for February on Saturday, February 23rd! Note that is not on Wednesday, but Saturday!!!** Our speaker will be Ray Bisio from Barstow, California. Ray is an active tour guide at the Gettysburg Battlefield and has agreed to talk to us about that battle. The title of his presentation is **"Three Days that Changed the World."** We are staying with our plan to meet on Saturday night because of room availability, even though the original reason for meeting on Saturday is long gone!

Many of you know that in recent years a Civil War Reenactment has been held at Gibson Ranch in nearby Elverta. This year's will take place on April 26, 27, and 28th. Friday the 26th will again feature the school program and we have been asked to participate. Saturday and Sunday will be the typical reenactment! On those days we will host a booth where we tell people about the SCWRT and pass the days with conversation while smelling gunpowder and watching unfolding battles. **I especially need volunteers for Friday!** Our members are asked to escort student groups through the various learning stations that the re-enactors have set up. I won't try to explain the details here, but if you can free up your schedule on Friday, April 26th, you are in for a fun experience. I will be providing more detail at upcoming meetings.

The next muster is on Saturday, February 23rd, at the usual time and place. If you have questions about Gettysburg, this is an excellent chance to get them answered!! See you there!

Paul Ruud, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2002
Sudwerk Restaurant, 1375 Exposition Boulevard, Sacramento

ATTENDANCE – 50	MEMBERS – 39	GUESTS – 11
Paul Ruud, President	Steve Breiter	Al McKim
Kit Knight, Vice President	Glyen Brown	Jim Middleton
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Ardith Cnota	Betty Mitchell
Walt Bittle, Secretary	Mitch Cnota	Maurice Mitchell
Dudley Albrecht	Jon Courtway	John Passerello
Claudia Andres	Alan Geiken	Bev Passerello
Jim Armstrong	Warren Holloway	Keith Roberts
Mark Aulman	Mary James	Don Schatzel
Mary Aulman	Ken Kitchen	Richard Spizzirri
George Beitzel	Russ Knauer	Roxanne Spizzirri
Roy Bishop	Dennis Kohlman	Clayton Williams
Fred Bohmfalk	Earl Martin	Bob Williams
Carol Breiter	Virginia Martin	John Zasso

1. The meeting was called to order by President Ruud, who reviewed this day in history. New members and guests were introduced and welcomed. The November minutes were approved as printed. Treasurer Foxworth presented the 2001 Financial Report and reported a current balance of \$1190.11. The raffle in November brought in \$46.
2. Program – Fred Bohmfalk, long-time member and tireless speaker presented another very informative program: “US Grant – A Personal Look”. Fred traced the life of Hiram Ulysses Grant from birth to death, hitting all the high (and low) points in between, including Grant’s California connections. Thanks, Fred – you do good work.
3. Committee/Activity Reports
 - a. Dudley Albrecht reported that *Gods and Generals* is “in the can” – opening date uncertain. He highly recommends *Black Hawk Down*, with the warning to be aware of its graphic scenes.
 - b. Ken Kitchen announced a militaria show at the Placer County Fairgrounds on February 24. The Veteran’s Hospital at Mather is selling engraved bricks to raise money for upgrades.
 - c. President Ruud informed the group that the Lee/Grant program scheduled for February 23 will have to be postponed due to the illness of one of the actors. Plans for a replacement program will be announced as soon as possible. Because our meeting room at the Sudwerk is booked on Wednesday, February 27, our meeting will remain on SATURDAY, February 23.
4. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 by President Ruud. A raffle followed.

Walt Bittle
Secretary

Next Regular Meeting
SATURDAY, February 23 at the Sudwerk Restaurant
Dinner (optional) at 6 pm – Meeting at 7 pm
Program: Gettysburg

SOMEBODY NAMED LAURA, 1871

Two mounted men rode
 up to my ranch; one led
 a horse carrying a man
 doubled over. I held
 my late husband's shotgun
 steady--my kids behind me--
 ready for whatever grief
 these strangers brought.
 They took off their hats
 and said, "Ma'am,
 we're part of a posse
 after John Wesley Hardin,
 and Ben here," they pointed
 to the slumped man,
 "found him." Yankee laws
 ran Texas after the War
 and many rebels felt it was
 only proper
 to be an outlaw. These deputies
 wanted to continue the search
 and leave Ben with me. I
 lowered my gun and reached
 to help lower Ben. He took
 three pain filled hours
 to die. Mostly, he raved
 and muttered about his home
 in Maine. He wanted
 whiskey and I knew
 a gut shot man would scream
 like a devil in grief
 if he drank. I moistened
 his lips and kept his head
 in my lap. Finally,
 he pleaded for somebody
 named Laura. Swearing
 he loved her. In a poem
 about a Confederate soldier
 dying far far from home,
 the poet urges the reader
 to kiss the dying rebel because
 "he's somebody's darling."
 It was northern men who killed
 my husband. Feeling oddly heroic
 and breakable, I wet
 Ben's lips with my own,
 saying, "I love you, too."

-- Kit Knight

Member Profiles

The last two issues we have been profiling new members of the Board of Directors. Jim Armstrong, Bob Williams, and Kit Knight have had their turn and now it is mine. I was born in Boulder, CO, spent the first few years on my grandparent's farm just outside of town. This was the Depression and jobs were hard to obtain. Near the end of WWII we moved to a little town 50 miles east of Pueblo, CO, then to Kansas City, MO just before my freshman year in high school. After graduation, a friend and I went on the adventure of a lifetime. We moved to California. After spending several happy go lucky years, I was drafted into the army and spent two years in Germany. I worked for Greyhound Bus Co. through much of this time after 1955. Obtaining a management job in 1963, I became aware of the value of college and went to the University of Nev. Reno continuing to work for Greyhound full time during my college years. After obtaining my BA in 1970, I continued attending graduate school until 1973. We moved to Sacramento in 1975. In 1984 I decided to go to work for Sacramento County and continued there until retirement in 1996. The last six years in Sacramento County I worked in the Long Term Medi-Cal unit determining eligibility for people in convalescent hospitals. My boys Mike and Brian were both in competitive swimming from 1973 to 1988. Mike went on to become a lawyer with his own business now and Brian works at Kaiser in the x-ray department. After retirement, I became interested in genealogy. That led to finding several ancestors who were in the Civil War. My direct ancestor, Ira Parker, was in the 38th Ohio Volunteer Infantry serving with Sherman's Army through the Atlanta campaign, the March to the Sea and the Carolinas. I saw an advertisement in one of the Civil War magazines about the Shiloh Conference and became interested in the Round Table. Last fall, Bernie spent several months training me to be editor of the Battle Cry and here I am.

Jim Middleton

MILITARIA SHOW

The next California Military Museum fund raiser will be held on the 24th of February, Sunday, in Johnson Hall on the Placer County Fair Grounds in Roseville. Over 60 tables are expected with a wide variety of military items available for sale. A 5.00 donation to the Museum is collected at the door. If you have a military item you would like appraised, this is a good opportunity so bring it out. Doors open at 9AM and the show goes to about 4PM. For questions or directions, call the Museum at (916) 442-2883.

IN MEMORIAM

On January 20th 2002, our Round Table lost one of its Charter Members when Walter Herbert Saxton passed away. Herb as he was known at the Round Table had not been active of late due to poor health but he had been an active participant for a number of years previously. An avid historian and military collector he even had his own cannon. He was a World War II Veteran and retired from the US Air Force. Later Herb was a volunteer in the California State Military Reserve and he was also a member of the Sons of Union Veterans as well as being an active outdoorsman and hunter. Herb was extremely knowledgeable about military history and especially the Civil War. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Software Review

By Walt Bittle

I was fortunate enough to visit the Civil War-era Drum Barracks in Long Beach. The site is well preserved, and the guide was delightful. [I was happy to discover that Jim Stanberry was on the Board of Directors there. I left my SCWRT card, and he has since called me at home.]

While at the Drum Barracks, I purchased "The Civil War Multimedia Screensaver", a CD-ROM produced by Focus Software (\$18). If you find this product in another location, do not buy it. Caveat Emptor!

I found it disconcerting to have to turn off the speakers to shut out the shouted commands, the bugle calls, and the small arms and cannon fire produced by the screensaver. Then I went into the "Facts File" attached and found a multitude of errors – from simple spelling to the continual misuse of commas and apostrophes. From Shenandoa to Calvary to Confederate – and on and on. Sloppiness to this degree is inexcusable.

I must say, in defense of Focus Software, that they did respond to my complaints with a refund of \$18.50. [I really wish they had let me correct their errors so other people would not be exposed to them.]

Auction

The Board of Directors has approved an upgrade to our sound system. Our current system will be auctioned at the March meeting. (tentative)

The Little Lady who made this Big War

She was Harriet Beecher Stowe, the little lady who made the big war.

In 1850 a series of laws were passed by the Congress of the United States that came to be known as the Compromise of 1850. They secured relative peace between North and South and delayed by a decade the coming Civil War. One of the parts of the compromise was a strengthened Fugitive Slave Law. It was passed to block the growing campaign by abolitionists and others opposed to slavery who were trying to help slaves escape captivity.

One of those most offended by the new Fugitive Slave Law was Harriet Beecher Stowe, a housewife, mother of seven children, and daughter of the famous Protestant preacher Lyman Beecher. She lived in Brunswick, Maine where her husband was a professor at Bowdoin College. As a confirmed abolitionist she felt it was her moral duty to help runaway slaves. She complained to a relative that the new law made her feel helpless and then set out to write a novel dramatizing the evils of slavery.

The vehicle she chose was a story serialized in the weekly abolitionist newspaper National Era. Despite her lack of firsthand experience with slavery her rich narrative and vivid descriptions were convincing. Periodically, a new chapter would describe the lives, challenges, sufferings, and pleasures of a cast of characters whose names were soon world famous. Little Eva, Sambo, Quimbo, the tragic Lucy, cruel mas-

ter Simon Legree, and, of course, Uncle Tom.

Uncle Tom's Cabin sold three million copies before 1860. It confirmed the worst fears of the abolitionists, offended many white Southerners who thought its descriptions of slavery to be extreme, spurred the forces that brought together the Republican Party, and enflamed and hardened opinion on all sides of the questions of slavery and states' rights. When Abraham Lincoln first met Mrs. Stowe in 1862 he is said to have greeted her, "So this is the little lady who made this big war."

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE?

Although Henry M. Stanley found fame when he discovered David Livingstone in Africa, years earlier he had engaged in a series of actions that may have been without parallel.

At the age of twenty and infected with "war fever," Stanley abruptly quit his job to enlist in the Sixth Arkansas Infantry. Along with numerous comrades captured at Shiloh, he was sent to a prison near Chicago.

Life at Camp Douglas was harsh, and there seemed to be no prospect of release. Hence the Confederate combat veteran became a "galvanized Yankee" by taking an oath of allegiance and exchanging his gray uniform for a blue one. Soon discharged because of illness, he went to New York and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Stanley, also known as John Rowlands, is the only serviceman known to have served in the Confederate army, the Union army, and the U.S. Navy. His unique military career came to an end when he jumped ship at a New Hampshire port early in 1865 and became a deserter.

THE GOLDEN TOUCH

California was not the site of the earliest U.S. gold rush. Rather, it took place in regions destined to be included in the Confederacy, North Carolina and Georgia. So much of the yellow metal came from the hills of North Georgia that a branch of the U.S. Mint was established at Dahlonega. Since gold and silver coins made up the only U.S. legal tender prior to the Civil War, the national supply of metal was a critical issue.

Production in California peaked between 1851 and 1857, and then fell to an average of about two million ounces annually during the war years. When the first shell exploded over Fort Sumter, gold pieces were abundant. Eagles, named for the design stamped upon them and first issued in 1795, were worth ten dollars. A double-eagle, issued by the U.S. Mint beginning in 1850, was twice as valuable. Half-eagles and quarter-eagles abounded, as did gold three-dollar and one-dollar coins. Anyone who didn't have a few pieces of gold in his pocket was indeed poor.

The outbreak of the war soon led to hoarding, causing more and more gold coins to disappear from circulation. This situation was made worse when the U.S. Treasury began to print greenbacks that were not redeemable in gold. This device, designed to multiply the perception of na-

tional wealth, led to depreciation of currency everywhere.

In the Confederacy, the crisis reached monumental levels just before the surrender at Appomattox. In March 1863, citizens residing in the Confederate capital of Richmond were offering \$400 in currency for \$100 in gold. Thirty days later, a person was lucky to get five double eagles for \$500. In Atlanta, a full year before Sherman arrived, a single eagle jumped in value to \$121.10 in July 1863. Clark Wright of the Ninth New York Zouaves wrote: "In September of 1861, \$1.10 of Confederate money was equal to \$1.00 in United States gold." By January 1865, it took \$60 Confederate money to buy one dollar in gold.

BREAKFAST MEETING

The Sacramento Civil War Round Table holds a breakfast meeting on the Saturday following the Board of Directors meeting which takes place on Wednesday two weeks before our regular meeting night on the last Wednesday of the month. The breakfast is held at 9:30AM at Lyons at the corner of El Camino and Watt Ave. We have an informal discussion and breakfast. Let Bernie Buenrostro know if you're coming so he can be sure to have enough space.

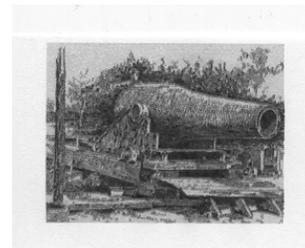




PLATE No. 43 A Job for the New Cabinet Maker, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, February 2, 1861

The Battle Cry Editor—This publication is a monthly newsletter (except December) of the Sacramento CWRT. Please submit items to me for publication at the Board of Directors meeting of each month or e-mail <BattleCryEditor@aol.com> Check the web site <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org/> for past newsletter editions.

Reenactors & Skirmisher WEB SITES

Reenactors of the American Civil War

[Http://www.home.inreach.com/mavgw/racwschedule.htm](http://www.home.inreach.com/mavgw/racwschedule.htm)

American Civil War Association

http://www.angelfire.com/sys/popup_source.shtml?Category=

Civil War Skirmish Association

<http://www.calweb.com/~arline/Events.html>

Sacramento Civil War Round Table
P.O. Box 254702
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702



Major General John Sedgwick