



**Volume 50, No. 1**  
**January, 2010**  
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**Wed. of the month 2 weeks**  
**before the regular meeting.**  
**Items can be given the editor**  
**by hand, mail or e-mail.**

# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
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<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



## President's Message:

Happy New Year! 2009 was a good year for our group adding many new members bringing enthusiasm stimulating for all of us. I have belonged to SCWRT for ten years and have enjoyed new friends and worked with devoted members who have always kept the best interests of our club in mind. Their service is frequently taken for granted and I wish to thank the board and membership for making my task enjoyable. The group that always comes through for the school kids at Gibson Ranch and the support we get for the meetings and conferences is greatly appreciated.

Our willing speakers are among our most important assets. Brad Schall has always come through with a dynamic presentation and December's on the Lincoln-Douglas debates was no exception. It's fascinating to learn how such massive crowds turned out for political issues and the speakers reached them without amplification. Thank you, Brad, for a fascinating talk. Thanks to Dennis Kohlmann's efforts we are anticipating excellent presentations this year.

Our website continues to be a highlight of our roundtable. Thanks to webmaster Kim Knighton's efforts, Bob William's contributions, (both articles and photography), the Battle Cry archives and numerous other categories, ours is second to none. If you haven't taken the time to look at it, please do, as it has much to offer. Our members frequently provide community service which often goes unnoticed. For example Ron Perisho was recently appointed to the Board of The Center For Civil War Photography and Bob Hanley gave a talk on Lincoln to the Rio Linda Elverta Historical Society at a fund raiser. Paul Ruud volunteers for several service organizations as does George Foxworth. Without those two I don't know how we could function and Jim Middleton gets out this monthly newsletter faithfully. Silver Williams is our hard-working veep who is ready to take over for me on a moment's notice and has provided the ice cream for our holiday meeting twice. Richard Sickert has brought some new ideas to our board and we look forward to his input in the future. I am delighted to have the privilege of serving with this crew.

So don't forget to join us January 10<sup>th</sup> for George Beitzel's discussion of the lost cause, always a fascinating topic. See you there.

**Don Hayden, President**

**MINUTES**  
 Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
 December 9, 2009  
 Hof Brau Restaurant, 2500 Watt Ave, Sacramento

Attendance-41

Members-37

Don Hayden, President	Brad Friedman	Maurice Mitchell	Patt Schall
Silver Williams, Vice President	Kyle Glasson	Bruce Nothmann	Kris Scivoletto
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Bob Hanley	Anne Peasley	Nicholas Scivoletto
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Joan Beitzel	Nancy Hayden	Horst Penning	Susan Williams
George Beitzel	Dennis Kohlmann, PD	Mark Penning	Maxine Wollen
Roy Bishop	Lowell Lardie	Ron Perisho	John Zasso
Rose Browne	Jim Middleton, Editor	Paul Ruud, IPP	<u>Guest-4</u>
Ardith Cnota	Vivian Miller	Nancy Samuelson	Jerry Cress
Mitch Cnota	Betty Mitchell	Brad Schall	Pamela Ellis
			Sean Keister
			Kathy Witzum

1. Meeting started at 7:00. Refreshments were served at the start of our meeting- two cakes, (thank you George) and ice cream, (thank you Silver). Also coffee and apple juice (thank you Don).
2. Member Ron Perisho was elected to the Board of Directors for the Center for Civil War Photography. Congratulations Ron. Ron is also getting together a program on Charleston in 3-D.
3. "A Civil War Christmas," a musical will be presented now through Dec 27 in Palo Alto.
4. Current officers introduced. Our by-laws state that we must have election of officers for the next 2 years by December. All current officers were voted in- 40 yeas, 1 nay.
5. Member Brad Schall spoke on "The Lincoln-Douglas Debates." He elaborated on the flamboyant Douglas and the reserved Lincoln- and their differences over slavery, war and many subjects relevant to today's debates. Brad's wife Patti helped out with the overhead projector. Thanks to you both for a great presentation.
6. The raffle was held and meeting adjourned at 8:50.

I hope you all have a wonderful 2010!

**Eddie Keister, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report:**

The cash balance following the December 9, 2009 meeting was \$2,807.89. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$83.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

<b>Coming Programs 2010</b>		
Jan. 13 <sup>th</sup>	George Beitzel	The Lost Cause
Feb. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Jim Swan	Chicago's Irish Legion
Apr. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Tom Mays	Champ Ferguson
Aug. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Jim Stanbery	The Cracker Line

## Book review by M. Wolf: "The Bloody Shirt" By Stephen Budiansky

*The Bloody Shirt* (2008) is subtitled, "The Terror After Appomattox." The author uses original sources (manuscript collections, contemporary newspapers, state archives, and transcripts of Congressional investigations) to depict the lawless, ruthless violence that terrorized white and black citizens of Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina from 1866 to 1876.

Stephen Budiansky is a journalist and historian who has written books on military espionage and air power. His narrative device here, expertly used, is to follow three northerners, all combat veterans of the Civil War, who were in the south during this decade.

Adelbert Ames of Maine commanded a division at Gettysburg, was appointed provisional governor of Mississippi in 1868, and then served as Republican senator and governor until he was forced out of office (and the state) in 1876. Alfred T. Morgan began the war as an 18 year-old private, was wounded at Gettysburg, and ended as a brevet Lieutenant Colonel, commanding a regiment. In the fall of 1865, he "went to Mississippi to seek his fortune." He bought land, planted cotton, and built a sawmill. His subsequent adventures were not at all pleasant, to say the least. He, too, was run out of the state in 1876. Major Lewis Merrill was a career soldier (Seventh Cavalry) who commanded some of the insufficient and powerless Federal troops during Reconstruction. His frustrations are revealed mainly through his detailed and erudite reports to superior officers.

The most fascinating source Mr. Budiansky has unearthed is a series of articles written for the new magazine, *The Nation*, in 1865 and 1866. Born in Canada, a Harvard graduate, John Richard Dennett was 26 years old. "His letters will appear every week," explained *The Nation's* editors, "and he is charged with the duty of simply reporting what he sees and hears, leaving the public as far as possible to draw its own inferences." Dennett spent eight months traveling all over the South, interviewing all classes of people of both races, staying in all types of lodgings, using every conveyance possible, including carts, boats, trains, and hoofing it. His reports appeared during 1865 and 1866, titled, *The South As It Is*. (His articles were reprinted by Compass Books in 1967.) Mr. Budiansky devotes twenty pages to this fascinating journey, and closes Chapter One with a quote from one of the first people Dennett met, a Virginia lumber merchant: "Let the Negro vote, and the Southern people will have to be kept down by a standing army."

This book is the story of Southern resistance to Negro voting, beginning soon after the war, and ending with the "Redeemer" state governments installed through intimidation and violence in 1875. As we know, it took a century for Lincoln's hopes for political equality and social harmony to be realized, and this book shows exactly why.

The letters written by Ames and Morgan, who both tried so hard and risked so much, are bitter and sad. Morgan wrote to President Grant from Yazoo City, MS, on September 9, 1875: "Your Excellency,"...Can nothing be done? I am in great danger of losing my life. "My friend, I fought four years; was wounded several times; suffered in hospitals, and as a prisoner;...to save a country such as this! I have some love left for my country, but what is country without protects its defenders? "I am ready to die if it is necessary, and good result from it; but to be butchered here by this mob after all I have done is too cruel."

Ames wrote to his wife (the daughter of Benjamin F. Butler) on September 3, 1875 from Jackson, MS: "...Col. Morgan was addressing a club of Republicans in Yazoo City, when some white liners interrupted, broke up the meeting and killed two men...The Democrats are organized into military companies and have assumed control – taken military possession of the county...I shall at once try to get troops from the general government. Of course it will be a difficult thing to do."

On September 7, Ames telegraphed to President Grant:

"Sir: "The sheriff of this county (Hinds) reports that since the 4th instant, he has been unable, after every effort, to maintain the peace and protect life. He reports murders by unauthorized armed bodies, who are scouring the country....A feeling of insecurity pervades in other counties than those named...A necessity of immediate action cannot be overstated." The author continues: "The U.S. Attorney General, a conservative former Democrat, replied. He had just heard from the president, he informed Ames; the president had told him, 'The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South.'" Just before the November election, Ames wrote to his wife, "...politically we are beaten – and that through violence, murder, and intimidation." The Democrats took a thirty thousand vote majority. Ames and Morgan both left the state soon after, never to return. They were lucky to escape with their lives.

"Bloody Shirt" is first-rate history, written beautifully. We know the broad generalities of what happened during this turbulent era, but Mr. Budiansky supplies just enough horrifying details on a personal level. This book and *Redemption* (Nicholas Lemann, 2006) are two superb (and relatively short) illuminations of a dark and disturbing episode in American history.

## Fort Negley and the Union Defense System at Nashville And a Biographical Sketch of its Builder Captain James St. Clair Morton, C.E.



When Gen. Grant and Adm. Foote captured Fort Donelson on 16 Feb 1862, the Cumberland River was opened to

federal gun boats for the entire 75 miles reach upriver to Nashville. The city was located on the left (south) bank of that river at the location of a 150 degree bend. Rebel hold of Nashville was no longer viable, being vulnerable to naval gunfire and amphibious landings from three directions. The then commander Braxton Bragg withdrew the Confederate garrison in mid-March 62 to be reoccupied by Federal forces under Don Carlos Buel soon thereafter.. (Some have said that this was Bragg's smartest move during the entire war?) The Feds immediately recognized that the place, while effectively protected on three sides by the river, was vulnerable to land attacks from the south; and they immediately began preparing an elaborate defense system. This work was assigned to Captain James St. Clair Morton of the Corps of Engineers.

J. S. C. Morton (1829-64) was an 1851 USMA graduate (2/42) His scholastic abilities were such that he was one of Professor Dennis Mahan's most outstanding engineering students; and this carried forward to him becoming one of Army Chief of Engineers Joseph Totten's most highly thought of designer/builders of field and coastal fortifications.

Straight out of West Point, James St. Clair Morton landed some of largest engineering jobs in the U.S. Military despite his age and lack of experience. He was assistant engineer in the construction of the defenses at Charleston, S.C. in 1851-52 and at Fort Delaware from 1852-55. Coastal defense projects like Fort Sumter and Fort Delaware were ongoing developments that took decades to build with construction beginning in the 1830s. Fort Sumter was still

incomplete at the opening shot of the Civil War. Morton was promoted to first lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers on 1 April 54 and returned to the U.S. Military Academy as assistant professor of mathematics and military engineering.

He became a strong advocate of the teachings of Dennis Hart Mahan, who had rejected the contemporary military strategy of the time by preaching defensive tactics including entrenchment. Morton was considered one of Mahan's best-known students and wrote several essays for the then Secretary of War on how to adopt Mahan's principals to protect the U.S. east coast. He early on was of the view that earthen artillery emplacements were much superior to the masonry forts then under construction at Fort Sumter and other locations. His views on this subject were set forth some six years before the disastrous rifled artillery attacked against Fort Pulaski<sup>1</sup> occurred and the end of masonry fortifications became incipient. He worked for a short period of time on Lighthouse construction and the D. C. water supply system.

In 1860, he was assigned to lead an expedition to Central America to explore potentials areas for construction of a railroad or canal, but soon contracted malaria. He returned to Washington only to be sent to the Dry Tortugas in March 1861 with the orders to put Fort Jefferson<sup>2</sup> into fighting condition. That isolated fort off the Florida Keys was ultimately used as a prison to house Dr. Samuel Mudd and other Lincoln conspirators. Again overcome by malaria, Morton returned north to recover and in May 1862 was assigned to be the chief engineer of Gen. Don C. Buell's Army of the Ohio. When Buell's army moved to Kentucky, Morton was ordered to remain in Nashville and supervise design and construction of fortifications to hold the state capitol against rebel land attack.

Keystone to the Nashville defenses was to be Fort Negley, named after Gen James Negley who was Provost Marshal of the Union garrison in that city. (Later renamed Fort Harker in honor of BG Charles Harker, who was killed at Kenesaw Mountain leading one of Sherman's ill conceived frontal attacks, but the name Negeley stuck.)

Fort Negley was a superbly designed structure utilizing stone, earth, logs and railroad iron; and at a strategic location on St Cloud Hill. It controlled three of the five roads south from Nashville and the Nashville-Stevenson RR, plus the city proper, in case of an uprising. The roads were the Granny White Pike, Franklin Pike and Murphysboro Pike. Fort Negley was 600 feet long and 300 feet wide, covered four acres, and was considered practically impregnable. The polygon-shaped with outer fortifications was designed for multiple fields of fire that capitalized on the accuracy of rifled artillery. The fort consisted of a central 12 ft. high stockade with corner turrets and ravelins<sup>3</sup> on the east and west sides within a large rectangular enclosure, plus several redans<sup>4</sup> that ran from the bastions to the northern scarp. (See isometric drawing) The fort, which occupied most of the hill, included two half bastions with bomb proofs on the south side. Armament was 30pdr Parrott rifles, and in most cases earth covered the fort's stone scarps; and the parapets were nine feet thick. Railroad rails were used to reinforce the gun emplacements. About 2000 free blacks and slaves worked on the fort to complete it in Dec. 62.

Other Forts that Morton had under construction at Nashville, more or less concurrently with Negley were Fort Casino, Fort Morton,, Fort Houston, Fort Gillem (Sill), Fort Garesche, Redoubt Donaldson and Hill 210. (Refer to map). Also, the state capitol building was fortified. Morton was assisted by six other engineering officers with construction experience, and was provided the usual close oversight and approvals from General Totten, Chief of Engineers and the country's master fort builder.

The Union fortification of Nashville was a masterful piece of military engineering, but it was never tested in battle. When John Bell Hood wandered back into Tennessee with his rebel army in Nov -Dec 63, after loosing the Battle for Atlanta, (Ostensibly on his way to Cincinnati!) he had lost a third of his army at Franklin and later another third at the Battle for Nashville; but George Thomas' Union forces had attacked and defeated Hood's then depleted

forces on that occasion some 3-5 miles south of the above described Nashville defense system. The guns at Fort Negley were fired only to signal the start of that Battle. Next to Washington D.C. Nashville was the most heavily fortified city in the country and overwhelmingly difficult to attack. Someone should have told Hood. One can only surmise the additional carnage that would have occurred had he attempted to move closer to the Nashville main-line fortification system.

In Oct 62, Rosecrans replaced Buel as CG, Army of the Cumberland; and as a former engineering officer he recognized the need for more intensive military engineering activities in the western theatre. This was due to the long supply lines, rough terrain, extensive mapping needs, bridging, road and railroad building and repair activities. He addressed the problem by establishing a new brigade within the A of the C called *Pioneers* to be comprised of artisans, craftsmen and laborers in 30 companies of 80-100 men each; to form three Battalions<sup>5</sup> of 10 companies. He did this by pulling these men out of other subdivisions of his army; an action which understandingly caused considerable unhappiness among the commanders of those units. In addition to infantry weapons, these men were equipped with axes, hatchets, cross-cut saws, files, handsaws, spades, shovels, picks, hammers, augurs, nails, spikes and rope, plus their normal military equipment. All gear was transported in wagons. Such units became known as combat engineers in later years. This new brigade was sent to Nashville for training under Morton, who was promoted to BG, USV as Brigade Commander, while continuing to serve as A of the C Chief Engineer.

After a month of training the new brigade joined the A of the C on the march to Murfreesboro and served admirably in the Battle of Stones River. Subsequently the pioneer brigade under Morton's supervision built Fort Rosecrans<sup>6</sup> during Jan-Jul 63. This complex was a massive fortified quartermaster & ordinance depot of some 200 acres crossing the N&C RR, which served throughout the Chattanooga and Atlanta Campaigns. Morton was promoted to Major, USA in July 63.

Morton took part in the 19-20 Sept 63 Battle of Chickamauga and was wounded; but during the uproar and finger pointing that followed that defeat, he was severely criticized by Rosecrans for lack of responsiveness. (Apparently a habit of Rosecrans after *he* had lost track of the deployment of his forces thus creating a void through which the enemy attacked and routed two-thirds of his army) Morton then asked for a transfer; and, when that was denied, requested to revert to his regular army grade of Major. It is said that this was the only instance during the Civil War of a General Officer voluntarily reducing his rank. Some have suggested that the Union army would have profited if several other engineering officers, who became generals in combat command positions, had done the same thing; i.e. remained in or returned to staff positions. Names mentioned include: McClelland, Halleck, Franklin, Warren, W.F. Smith, McPherson, and Gilmore. All of these former engineering officers had provided excellent service in key staff positions, but failed in varying degrees as top level line commanders<sup>7</sup>.

Major Morton returned to Nashville to strengthen those defenses, and then served as an Assistant to the Chief of Engineers in Washington. In May 64, he was back in the field as Chief Engineer of IX Corps at Petersburg. James St. Clair Morton was killed while on a reconnaissance at that location on 17 June 64, age 35. He was buried with military honors in Philadelphia's Laurel Hill cemetery. The country had lost a potential future leader in the fields of science and engineering.

After the war Fort Negley continued to be garrisoned by a small Union force until 1867 at which time it was abandoned. The City had neither use for nor liking of a Union Fort within its limits. It was used for a short period as a meeting place by the Ku Klux Klan. By the 1920's the old fort had deteriorated badly and some of its stone had been used to build a local reservoir. Legislation had been introduced to preserve Fort Negley and create a greater Nashville National Military Park patterned after the national military park bills of the 1890's, but to no avail.

During the 1930's renovation work was undertaken at the old fort as a WPA project; and much of it was rebuilt; but it was again abandoned soon thereafter. During that work an attractive stone entry gate was built in the form of the C of E castle emblem. But afterwards deterioration continued until the late 1990's when the City of Nashville took a renewed interest in the old facility: spending large funds in renovation work, developing a state of art self-guided tour program and building a superb Visitor Center. From now on when you ask a native of Nashville the location of their Civil War Battlefield Military Park you will not receive a blank stare. Rather, you will be given directions to Fort Negley. Closed on Mondays, Phone 615-862-8470.

**Notes:**

<sup>1,2</sup> Depending on interest, possible future *Battle Cry* articles may include discussions of these and other coastal fortifications of the 3<sup>rd</sup> System; and perhaps a review of Edwin Bearss' extended staff paper on Fort Point and Battery Alcatraz construction. <sup>3</sup>A triangular detached work. <sup>4</sup>A V-shaped work open to the back. <sup>5</sup>Infantry regiment size, but still designated Pioneer *Battalions*. <sup>6</sup>Most of this area has been urbanized; a few small remaining remnants are units of the Stones River NBP. <sup>7</sup>Suggested reasons for this are set forth in a *Battle Cry* article of July 04 titled, *In Partial Defense of Wm. B. Franklin*.

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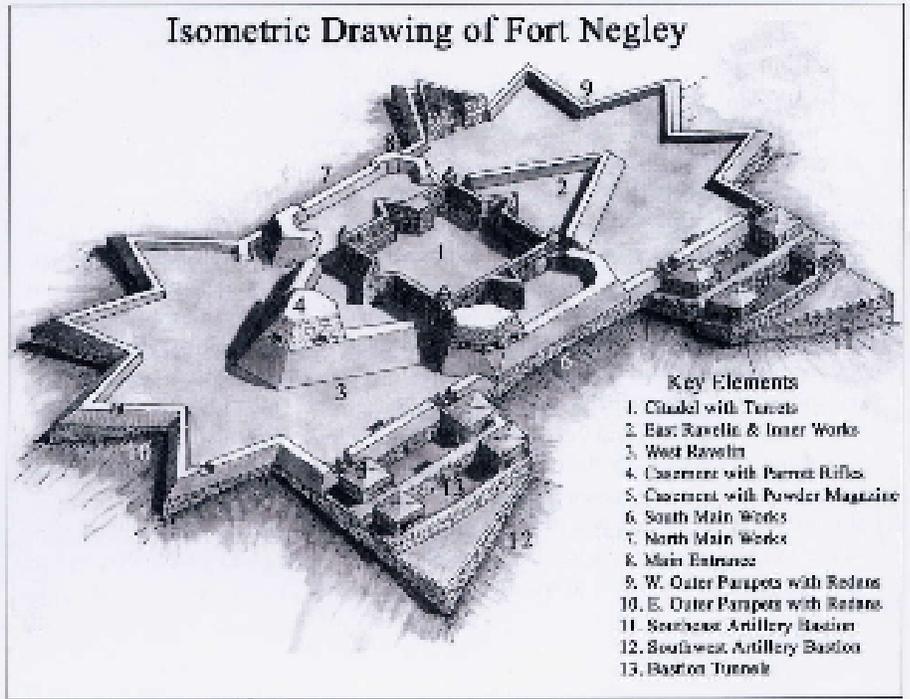
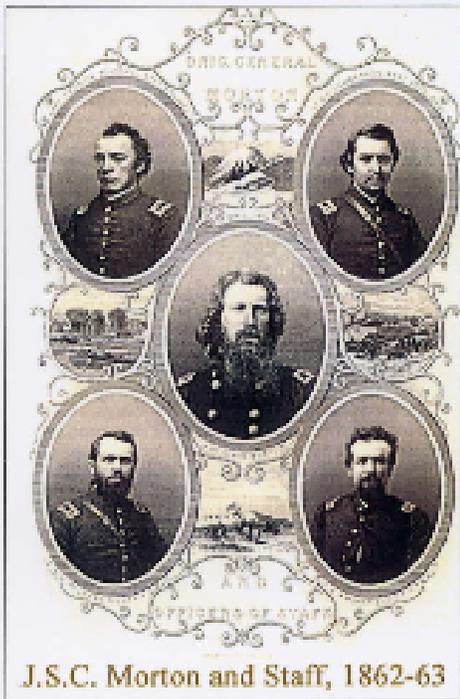
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Personal Conversation with Visitor Center Staff 10-2-09  
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**R. A. Williams: 1-05-10**





# Fort Negley Gateway and Visitor Center



- Key Elements**
- 1. Citadel with Turrets
  - 2. East Ravelin & Inner Works
  - 3. West Ravelin
  - 4. Casemate with Parrot Rifles
  - 5. Casemate with Powder Magazine
  - 6. South Main Works
  - 7. North Main Works
  - 8. Main Entrance
  - 9. W. Outer Parapets with Redans
  - 10. E. Outer Parapets with Redans
  - 11. Southeast Artillery Bastion
  - 12. Southwest Artillery Bastion
  - 13. Bastion Tunnel



