



**Volume 56, No 1
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Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
P.O. BOX 254702
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President's Message

Happy New Year to All and Sundry!

Rick and I enjoyed our holidays with family visitors here up in Oregon. Whenever we get together as a tribe, Rick quotes Zorba the Greek and calls it, "the whole catastrophe." I love the commotion and the spectacle and all the excitement and food and decorating and music and pageants and recitals that this season brings. But even I have to admit that when it was over, I was ready for quiet time.

This month we have our own Paul Ruud speaking. He will be discussing none other than the controversial Jefferson Davis. Here is a man who has been chronicled, studied, and dissected for a century and a half. His was an embattled life. I, for one, am immensely interested in what Paul can bring to bear on this subject.

We have a great line up of speakers this coming year, and we are hoping to increase our membership. Please bring friends and family to enjoy a night with us. The interest in the Civil War has not waned, and more books, movies, and scholarship await our examination.

Every year, I decide on a motto instead of a resolution. 2015 had me repeating to myself: "Why Not Now?"

This year, I'm observing an old Polish proverb: "Not my circus; Not my monkeys." Rick has his doubts that I will abide this wisdom.

I wish you all the Happiest New Year – just full of wonderful possibilities.

Anne Peasley, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, December 9, 2015
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 33

MEMBERS – 25: Anne Peasley, President, George W. Foxworth, Treasurer, Paul Ruud, Secretary, Don Hayden, Vice President, Silver Williams, Program Director, Jim Armstrong, Roy Bishop, Harvey Cain, Marsha Jutovsky Cain, Monica Foxworth, Arnd Gartner, Nina Henley, MAL, Wayne Henley, MAL, Chris Highsmith, Bill Jackson, Jane Jackson, Dennis Kohlmann, Barbara Leone, Rick A. Peasley, John Rice, Ed Rill, Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, Richard Sickert, Roxanne Spizzirri.

GUESTS – 8: Esther Boeck, George Costenbader, Sally Draper, Susan Draper, Gloria Perez, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri, Don Zajic.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Anne Peasley followed by the Pledge.
2. President Peasley announced that the Sacramento CWRT would be hosting the 2017 West Coast Civil War Conference on November 10-12, 2017. She invited members to volunteer to assist in the effort and also to share their thoughts on a theme for the Conference.
3. Anne conducted the raffle and as usual, several lucky members shared in the loot.
4. Our speaker, home-grown Nick Scivoletto, gave a “selfie” introduction. He is a UOP (University of the Pacific) graduate and is currently working on his California teaching credential at Sacramento State University. Nick’s subject was the Confederate General Joseph Eggleston Johnston.
5. Johnston’s family moved to Abingdon, VA when he was three years old where he grew up. He went on to West Point and graduated 13th in a Class of 46 in 1829. Among his classmates was Robert E. Lee. He served valiantly in the Mexican War and was awarded three brevet promotions to finish the War as a Brevet Colonel. His post War service took him to the western frontier and to Kansas during the bloody disturbances leading up to the Civil War. In 1860, he became a Brigadier General and Quartermaster of the US Army. He resigned from the USA in April of 1861 and was ultimately appointed as a Confederate General in August. This put him fourth in seniority among Confederate officers which started a lifelong feud between Johnston and Jefferson Davis. After Johnston was wounded at Seven Pines, he was replaced by Robert E. Lee as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia on June 1, 1862.
6. He returned to duty in November of 1862 and was made Commander of the Department of the West over both Bragg in Tennessee and Pemberton in Mississippi. In December, 1863, he took command of the Army of Tennessee with orders to assume the offensive. In the Atlanta Campaign, he dropped back skillfully before Sherman’s overwhelming strength. Johnston was replaced by General Hood in July of 1864 and later assigned to lead the Army of Tennessee in the North Carolina Campaign.
7. Johnston surrendered his Army to Sherman on April 26, 1865, even though Davis had ordered him south to continue the War. In 1868, Johnston started an insurance company in Atlanta which four years later had 120 agents. Settling in Washington in the years that followed, he served as a railroad commissioner.
8. Johnston served as a pallbearer at the funerals of George McClelland and Ulysses S. Grant. He stood in the rain with his hat off at Sherman’s funeral in New York City, resulting in pneumonia which led to his death in 1891. Along the way, he had written a number of books and articles about the War.
9. President Peasley thanked Nick with kind words and Silver Williams presented him both wine and Pepsi in gratitude for his excellent presentation.
10. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM. The next Board Meeting will be Wednesday, January 13, 2016.

Paul Ruud, Secretary

Treasurer’s Report

The cash balance following the December 9th meeting was \$5,104.13. Thanks to Anne Peasley, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$79.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2016

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 13th	Paul G. Ruud	"Jefferson Finis Davis"
February 10th	Jim Lane	"Free State of Jones"
March 9th	George Beitzel	"Flight Into Oblivion"
April 12th	Susan Williams	"Two Brothers in the Civil War"
May 11th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
June 8th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

2016 Membership

The 2016 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2016. The dues are \$20.00 and you can renew at a monthly meeting or send to the Treasurer through the mail. For all checks, make them payable to **Sacramento Civil War Round Table** and send them to

George W. Foxworth
9463 Salishan Court
Sacramento, CA 95826-5233

Remember, you can also pay at any monthly meeting.

NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the 1st of each month for that month's **Battle Cry**. However, you can submit articles at anytime. Please submit your items in Microsoft Word or regular email to:

gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net

Do not submit scanned files since I need to edit files to combine the **Battle Cry**.

The **Battle Cry** is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento CWRT. Submissions are subject to availability of space and size limitations. Submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization or the Editor. The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 254702, Sacramento, CA 95865-4702. <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org> is the web site address. Check the web for past newsletter editions and information about the group.

Alexander Stephens

By Judith Breitstein

Alexander Stephens was born on February 11, 1812 near Crawfordville, Georgia. His mother died when he was three months old. His father remarried quickly. He and his new wife produced 7 half siblings for Alexander. Sadly, when Alexander was 14 years old, his father and stepmother died within days of each other. Due to a lack of money, the children were all sent to separate homes to be raised. Alexander remained extraordinarily close to his youngest brother, Linton, who was only 3 years old when their parents passed away. Alexander later adopted Linton and paid for him to go to Law School.



Sickly from birth, Stephens rarely weighed more than 95 pounds. He was a bit under 5'7" in height and always so pale he gave a spectral appearance. From an early age on, he was referred to as "Little Aleck." He tended to wear layers of clothes, often accompanied by a heavy overcoat. He suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, colitis, migraines, angina, toothaches, cervical disc disease, bladder stones, and had several bouts with pneumococcal pneumonia which he barely survived.

At 57, a gate he was repairing with the help of two slaves fell on him and crushed his hips. From that time on he was confined to a wheelchair. He never married, fearing he was not strong enough to be a good husband or father. His bedroom dressers were littered with bottles of medicine and salves. His bedroom windows were always sealed shut and his slaves said if a moth somehow got in, the smell of the medicines would kill it. Alexander had a brilliant mind that seemed to make up for his physical failings. He graduated first in his class at the University of Franklin (now the University of Georgia). It was at University where he met his lifelong friend, Crawford Long, pharmacist, surgeon, and first to use ether as an anesthesia during surgery and later, widely used for amputations and during childbirth.

Although he was a staunch believer in slavery, Stephens was remarkably kind to his slaves. He kept an open account in the Crawfordville General Store for them to buy shoes and clothing as needed. He allowed them to marry and taught some to read, although it was against the law. He maintained decent living conditions for them and buried them in his cemetery when

they died. One slave, Pierce, was said to have fled in 1863. After the War, Stephens located him and helped him find a Civil Service job in Washington, D.C. No slaves left him after emancipation.

Stephens was a powerful orator despite his delicate frame. He worked as a teacher for eighteen months but gave it up for the practice of law. Later, he had a long and successful career in politics. When the South seceded, Stephens was elected Vice President of the Confederacy although everyone knew he had spoken out vehemently against secession. Stephens and Jefferson Davis disagreed on just about everything. When Stephens was arrested after the War, he refused to see or speak to Davis who was on the same boat bringing them to prison.

After the War, Stephens went back to serving in the US House of Representatives until he was elected Governor of Georgia. In the fourth month of his term, he died suddenly at the age of 71 on March 4, 1883.

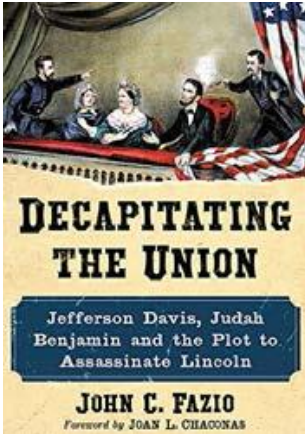
How strange that a man who seemed to be on the verge of death most of his life, outlived all his younger brothers and sisters.

Stephens was originally buried in the famous Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta but later his body was moved to his home, Liberty Hall, in Crawfordville, and placed with his brother, Linton, in the front yard. Visiting his home is like stepping back into time. Many of his original furnishings and personal possessions are still there. Even his cache of original medicine bottles remain. The docents say, it feels like Stephens stepped out for a moment and they're always expecting to hear his knock on the front door. If you're ever passing through Crawfordville, Georgia, be sure to stop and pay a visit. You won't regret it...from the home, to the slave cabins, to the cemetery and adjoining slave cemetery, to the park, it is an incredible spot to experience.



The grave of Alexander Stephens. Submitted by Judith Breitstein.

Decapitating the Union: Jefferson Davis, Judah Benjamin, and the Plot to Assassinate Lincoln



Author: John C. Fazio, Review by: Joe Truglio, Illustrated, photos, notes, bibliography, index, 420pp., 2015, McFarland, www.mcfarlandpub.com, \$45 softcover

With the end of the Civil War sesquicentennial, we are seeing the last of the rush to print. Fittingly, the assassination is amongst these books. This book, in particular, deals strictly with who was responsible for the act and why. Lincoln's murder was perhaps the defining moment of the War. It is still a controversial event and the author attempts to clear up that controversy and put the responsibility firmly in the hands of those who ordered the act, the Confederate Government. Not since *Come Retribution*, by William A. Tidwell, James O. Hall, and David W. Gaddy, has so thorough an account been written.

The book is presented in thirty chapters, each with a specific issue to discuss. The first two are an overview of events. Chapters 3-16 delve into the participants. The rest discuss events and accouterments used, such as the knife and pistol.

Mr. Fazio uses a lawyer's analytical style to present his case. Each person or event is dissected and presented in logical format. He lists all the reasons why or why not. He then breaks everything down to basics – leaving, in his opinion, the only logical conclusion. Copious notes and a strong bibliography are listed. The research is both meticulous and exhaustive. Each chapter leads to the next to present a full picture, which is presented in the last and best chapter, "The Conspiracy" itself. It is here that we are told, in no uncertain terms, that the planning, financing, recruitment of operatives, motives, and responsibility for the act lies at the feet of the Confederate Government and its leaders, Jefferson Davis and Judah Benjamin.

This is the longest chapter, fifty pages. It is written in similar style to the others, with listings of reason, motives, etc. Each one is broken down logically till there is but one conclusion remaining: "they did it."

Mr. Fazio states in his conclusions that we may never know the "whole truth" but that this attempt gets us closer to that truth. I agree to a point. I am a believer that the Confederate Government was complicit in assassinating Lincoln. I also agree with the author's conclusion that there is no "smoking gun." With that in mind, the reader must decide just what is the truth.

This is a most thought provoking look at the assassination and well worth being on your bookshelf. The cost is a bit steep but I found every page an adventure. One cannot come to a decision on who ordered the assassination without reading this book!

Submitted by Judith Breitstein.