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**2018 Officers:**

**Dennis Kohlmann, President**  
(916) 726-4432  
[gkohlma@aol.com](mailto:gkohlma@aol.com)

**Anne M. Peasley, IPP**  
(530) 320-5112  
[apeasley22@gmail.com](mailto:apeasley22@gmail.com)

**Donald J. Hayden, Vice  
President**  
(916) 485-1246  
[djhbooklover@yahoo.com](mailto:djhbooklover@yahoo.com)

**Silver N. Williams,**  
Program Director  
(916) 408-4574  
[snw5678@aol.com](mailto:snw5678@aol.com)

**Barbara A. Leone, Secretary**  
(916) 457-3915  
[bleonelachatte@hotmail.com](mailto:bleonelachatte@hotmail.com)

**George W. Foxworth,**  
Treasurer  
(916) 362-0178  
[gwofforth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwofforth@sbcglobal.net)

**Richard E. Sickert, MAL**  
(916) 564-4608  
[r.sickert@comcast.net](mailto:r.sickert@comcast.net)

**Paul G. Ruud, MAL**  
(530) 886-8806  
[paulgruud@gmail.com](mailto:paulgruud@gmail.com)

**VACANT**  
Editor

**SCWRT Website**  
[www.sacramentocwrt.com](http://www.sacramentocwrt.com)

**Kim Knighton, Webmaster**  
[webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com](mailto:webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com)

# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702  
<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



## President's Message

This month starts a new month with a new President. Don Hayden again did an outstanding job keeping our Round Table going and delivering a super December talk on "Major Jonathan Letterman." I hope to be able to be a suitable replacement. We are very blessed to have outstanding people on our Board of Directors.

I think we should set some goals for this next year. One goal I propose: Let's make 2018 the year of the new member. As I looked around at our last meeting, I saw many new people. We are getting new members but we need more. I am convinced we can grow. I will have more on that at our next meeting.

Within the Civil War Round Table community, we have a reputation as one of the best and largest clubs. This is a real advantage as we have only to build on what we have been doing and do it better. One idea is to fly in at least one special speaker each year. This may require a special venue. We can do this.

The Civil War is the War that never goes away. This year, our country wrestles with what to do with Southern Monuments. The British Historian John Keegan once wrote that history is a discipline where we apply today's morals to the past: How could those people have thought like that?

**Dennis Kohlmann, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, December 13, 2017**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDANCE – 23**

**MEMBERS – 18:** Don Hayden, Vice President, George W. Foxworth, Treasurer, Barbara Leone, Secretary, Roy Bishop, Mark Carlson, Arnd Gartner, Ron Grove, Nina & Wayne Henley, Chris Highsmith, Jane Jackson, James Juanitas, Dennis Kohlmann (MAL), Grace Long, John Rice, Paul Ruud (MAL), Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, Richard Sickert, Roxanne Spizzirri, Michael Werner, Dan & Faye Wolfe.

**GUESTS – 5:** Esther Boeck, Chris Hayden, Lynda Richman, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri.

1. The meeting was called to order by Don Hayden who led the Pledge. Nick Scivoletto conducted the raffle. Paul Ruud introduced Don who presented his talk on Dr. Jonathan Letterman. He is considered to be the father of battlefield medicine. Don is especially interested in Letterman because he was a hospital Corpsman in Korea.
2. Letterman was the son of a surgeon and after graduating Jefferson Medical College in Pennsylvania, he became an Assistant Surgeon in the Army Medical Department. His first assignment was against the Seminole Indians in Florida until 1853. Then he went to Minnesota, New Mexico Territory, and California.
3. He was assigned to the Army of the Potomac when the Civil War began. The Sanitary Commission had been striving for a younger Surgeon General with new ideas and Lincoln appointed Dr. William Hammond to that position. Subsequently, Hammond, who was a friend and colleague of Letterman, appointed him with the rank of Major as Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac itself. Having gotten instructions from McClellan to do what was necessary to improve and re-organize the Medical Service, he instituted principles of triage and standard operating procedures. He was finally allowed to apply management principles to battlefield medicine. He established an effective system to distribute medical supplies. Mobile field hospitals were built and connected by an ambulance corps controlled by the medical staff. With each battle, the removal and care of the wounded continued to improve. But poor diet disease, exhaustion, and poor living conditions once the wounded were healed, remained.
4. Gettysburg was very demoralizing for Letterman. Ambulances were being used for other purposes. When the Army followed Lee the medical staff followed the Army leaving the wounded on the field to die.
5. He himself was chronically ill. He had married and had two small daughters. He resigned from the Army in December 1864, moved West, and speculated in a failed oil venture with his wife's family money. She died suddenly shortly after. It was thought from cholera but might have been from a uterine artery hemorrhage. He suffered from guilt that he misdiagnosed his wife's illness. He was twice elected Coroner in San Francisco where he died from depression and illnesses at age 47. Letterman Army Hospital in the Presidio honors and recognizes his contributions to military medicine.
6. The next Board Meeting will be Wednesday, January 10, 2018, 10:00 AM at Brookfield's Restaurant.

**Barbara Leone, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance following the December 13th meeting was \$6,209.25. Thanks to Nicholas Scivoletto, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$64.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2018

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 10th	Tim & Virginia Karlberg	"A Chronology of Letters From Soldiers' Home"
February 14th	Bernie Quinn	"Wyman White, Sharpshooter"
March 14th	Dennis Kohlmann	"Blame it on Texas"
April 11th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
May 9th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
June 13th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

## **2018 Membership**

The 2018 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2018. 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

Do not submit files that I cannot edit.

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.

# Clara Barton

Throughout her long, busy and successful life, founder of the American Red Cross, Clara Barton, suffered from severe physical and emotional breakdowns. Clara fought a lifelong battle with depression, paranoia, real and psychosomatic illnesses. A diary found buried in the walls of her home and warehouse in Glen Echo, Maryland reveals she often had thoughts of suicide. She wrote that she “self-medicated” through work to fight the “black snakes” of depression.

Clarissa Harlowe Barton was born in North Oxford, Massachusetts on Christmas Day, 1821, the fifth and youngest child, to Sarah and Stephen Barton. Her older siblings were “Dolly,” Stephen, David, and Sally.



Clara's father, Captain Stephen Barton, had served under “Mad” Anthony Wayne in the French and Indian Wars. Biographers suggest he might have suffered from

what we now call P.T.S.D. Clara's mother, Sarah, was given to sudden and violent rages. She would wait until food was half rotted before she served it to her family. She baked fresh fruit pies which she then hid in the basement until they were inedible. Stephen and Sarah fought loudly and often. When Sarah died in 1851, Clara returned home to be with her family but refused to mourn her mother. She rode a bicycle through town and would not wear black.

By the time Clara was six, her sister, Dolly, was well on the road to insanity. Dolly became violent and chased her sister-in-law through the fields with an axe. She had to be kept in a locked room with barred windows. Dolly constantly pounded on the door and floorboards of her room, her screams echoing throughout the house. This was the background noise of Clara's childhood.

Clara's brother, Stephen, had an erratic personality, much like their mother's, and there is strong evidence that Clara's brother, David, committed suicide in 1888 when he found himself in financial difficulties. Some sources say that the brothers were not honest businessmen.

Clara was short, plump, homely, and extremely timid as a child. She was sent to Colonel Richard's Boarding School. Her parents believed she could overcome her shyness by mingling with others outside her immediate family. Clara did not thrive there and her father brought her home. When Clara was eleven, her brother, Stephen, fell from a barn roof. Clara nursed him for two years and was credited with his recovery. She grew depressed when he no longer needed her care. Clara had found that she enjoyed being of service and loved the accolades heaped upon her.

When a phrenologist examined Clara when she was eighteen years old, he recommended teaching as a way to overcome her debilitating shyness. The experiment was a success. By the year 1856, not only had Clara overcome her disability but she had started the first free Public School in the country in Bordentown, New Jersey. It was considered inappropriate for a woman to be principal of a school so Clara was bypassed for a man who was given twice her salary. Clara had a breakdown after this insult. She left New Jersey and went to Washington, DC where she became the first woman clerk in the Patent Office. Though she was the target of sexual harassment and fell ill with malaria, she remained at her job until the Civil War called her.

After the horrors of the War, a bout with typhoid fever and a failed romance with the married Colonel John J. Elwell, Clara started a new endeavor in Washington, DC, the Bureau of Missing Soldiers. Clara was able to identify 22,000 missing men to their families. She established the National Cemetery at Andersonville, helped to identify the bodies of soldiers who had been held prisoner there, and saw that their graves were properly marked. By 1869, the Office was closed. Clara was at her worst when she was idle. She had another total nervous collapse. She went to Europe to recover and this is where she first heard of the International Red Cross and the Treaty of Geneva. She began her struggle to make the Red Cross a reality in the United States.

When her sister, Sally, died of stomach cancer in 1874, Clara took to her bed for two years. She realized she needed help and signed herself into a sanitarium in Dansville, New York. Her work for the Red Cross is probably what eventually healed her mind.

In later years, Clara was loaded with honors and awards for helping thousands of others through her work with the Red Cross. Her constant activity seemed to keep the demons away. Clara kept her hair dyed black and dressed in buttons and bows, hoping to look young and stay relevant.

Clara was a poor administrator and bad at management. She never learned to delegate duties. Financial transactions, donations, and expenditures were written on scraps of paper. Homes she lived in and used as warehouses for supplies were bought partially with her money and partially with money from the Red Cross. In 1904, after twenty three years as President of the Red Cross and before she was accused of malfeasance, Clara resigned.

Clara Barton died of pneumonia at her home in Glen Echo, MD on April 12, 1912. She was ninety one years old. She is buried at North Cemetery in North Oxford, Massachusetts.



Submitted by Judith Breitstein

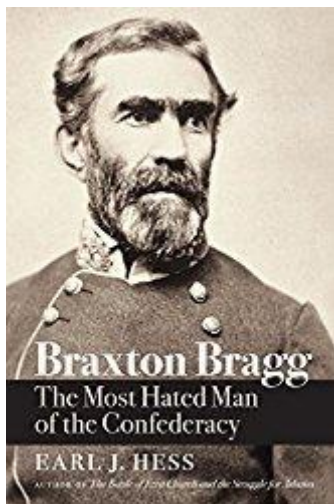
# Braxton Bragg: The Most Hated Man of the Confederacy

By Earl J. Hess

Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2016. Pp. xx, 341. ISBN 978-1-4696-2875-2.

Review by Robert L. Glaze, The University of Tennessee

This superb study of Braxton Bragg is very aptly subtitled. A punch line of many a joke at conferences and Civil War Round Tables, Bragg has fared poorly in both the War's historiography and its popular memory. The conventional image of the General is of an obtuse, irascible, cold-hearted, and incapable officer who, more than any other Rebel leader, doomed the Confederacy. He poisoned relations within the Western Confederate high command and stymied the South's War effort on both the strategic and tactical levels. While some of this rings true, the prolific Civil War historian Earl Hess has now given readers a more proficient, nuanced, and, indeed, human Braxton Bragg.



To claim that Bragg was the most capable of all the Army of Tennessee's Commanders seems like faint praise, but Hess marshals considerable evidence that the General was an excellent administrator, devoted and brave Southern patriot, and skilled tactician. Granted, he lost more battles than he won, but Hess reminds us that he was Commander of the Army when it reached its organizational and tactical apex. Bragg managed to reinvigorate that Army after its bloody defeat at Shiloh (6–7 April 1862) and led it to "its most impressive tactical victories ... on October 8 at Perryville, December 31 at Stones River, and September 20 at Chickamauga" (276). Hess backs up his assertions with compelling statistics, noting that Bragg was responsible for 75 percent of the Army's tactical successes and only 28.5 percent of its failures. Such numbers lead him to the bold, sure-to-be-controversial, yet reasoned claim that "the Army of Tennessee was Bragg's Army" (276).

While the General was far from a flawless field commander, Hess argues that his wartime failures were more personal than military. It was, he posits, Bragg's stubborn recalcitrance and poor relations with his subordinates and the Southern press that, more than anything else, damaged his reputation. Like many of the South's Generals, he proved to be a poor politician. He rarely courted Southern newspaper editors and proved remarkably clumsy when he tried to.

Bragg was burdened with several insubordinate, incapable, and intemperate lieutenants. Men like Leonidas Polk, William J. Hardee, John C. Breckinridge, and Daniel Harvey Hill consistently breached military protocol or performed poorly. Bragg was typically unforgiving and vindictive in punishing his subordinates' transgressions. After the Battle of Chickamauga (18–20 September 1863), for example, he waged war on his subordinates more than on the Yankees. Hess rightly holds the General himself partially responsible for the decline in his wartime popularity, effectiveness, and credibility.

Hess's systematic, clear, balanced, and cogent assessment of Bragg's generalship seamlessly blends narrative and analysis. Using his own pathbreaking research on infantry tactics, he reevaluates Bragg's abilities in the context of the existing historiography. The result is a discerning and persuasive account of the course of the War in the West. For example, despite Bragg's tactical victory at Perryville, the Kentucky Campaign as a whole was a Confederate failure. Moreover, Hess shows, Bragg was partly responsible for this; he failed to grasp the enemy's intentions and lost effective control over some of his subordinates. However, other Generals, namely Polk and Edmund Kirby Smith, also sabotaged the Rebel invasion of the Bluegrass State. Most of the blame, argues Hess, falls on Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who failed to place Bragg in explicit command of the expedition. Civil War military operations were convoluted and often confused; Hess demonstrates that explanations for their results are legion.

The author meticulously charts Bragg's popularity among Rebel soldiers and on the Confederate homefront. At no point was the General universally condemned. He always had his supporters, whether in the wake of Perryville, Stones River, and Chickamauga, or after his appointment as Jefferson Davis's military advisor. This means that Bragg's image as scapegoat and pariah was, at least in part, a postwar construct.

Hess maintains that Jefferson Davis's stalwart faith in Bragg reflected a genuine appreciation for his abilities, even though the men's relationship prior to the War had been contentious and did not evolve into friendship until the conflict's final stages. Besides Davis, Bragg's wife Elise was his primary source of strength. Their letters reveal a loving husband, ailing patriot, and stubborn commander who always held his Army's rank and file in higher regard than his Generals.

The author states plainly in his introduction that he has written not a traditional biography, but a close examination of Bragg's wartime career. He devotes few pages to the General's life before or after the Civil War. While this may disappoint some readers, Earl Hess has fully achieved his stated goal. Thanks to this brilliant biography, Braxton Bragg will no longer remain a dehumanized, "almost ... cardboard figure among Civil War enthusiasts and even among some professional historians" (xi).

**Submitted by Dr. Bruce Castleman**