



**Volume 62, No. 1  
January, 2022**

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# *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**

**No message for now.**

**Dennis Kohlmann, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
Wednesday, December 8, 2021  
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

**ATTENDANCE – 0:**

**MEMBERS – 0:** No meeting and no Members.

**GUESTS – 0:** No meeting and no Guests.

1. No meeting. Meetings are cancelled until further notice due to COVID-19. The Hof Brau is open to decreased inside dining and starts closing at 6:30 PM.
2. The next Board Meeting is Wednesday, January 12, 2022.

**George W. Foxworth for Vacant, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance on December 8th was \$4,324.25. No meeting and no raffle.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2022

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 12th	"No Speaker"	"No Topic"
February 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
March 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
April 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
May 11th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
June 8th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"

## 2022 Membership

The 2022 membership renewal was due as of January 1, 2022. The dues are \$30.00 and you can renew and 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

## NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the first 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:

[gwoffoxworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwoffoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

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.

## **Friends of Civil War Alcatraz**

The Friends of Civil War Alcatraz (FOCWA) is a group of individuals interested in the Civil War history of Alcatraz island. We are made up of teachers, veterans, historians, and others who like to research and read about how Alcatraz became an important Fort for the protection of San Francisco during the Civil War.

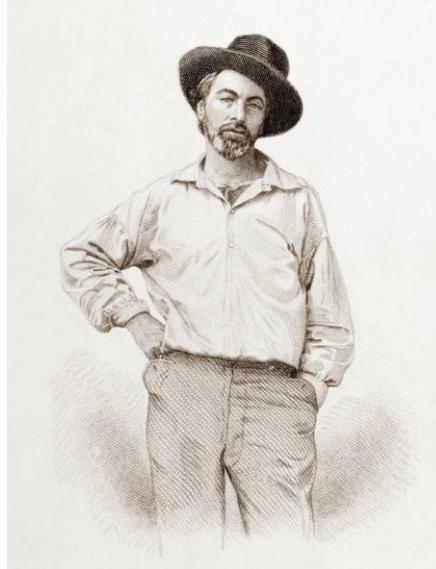
Some of our members are also National Park Service volunteers who assist the rangers in giving public programs, in uniform, about the Union soldiers stationed on the Island and interesting events that occurred there between 1859 and 1865. We publish a newsletter every month, which can be found on our website [www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org](http://www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org) .

We also visit schools and organizations to tell that early history of the Island, long before it became the notorious Federal prison. And we conduct living history days twice a year, in conjunction with the American Civil War Association, to give the public an idea of what the Island was like as a Union Fort.

**Submitted by Stephen Johnson**

# Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman was born on May 31, 1819 in Long Island, New York. Eight of the nine children born to Louisa Van Velsor and Walter Whitman, Sr. lived to adulthood. Walt's father had tried his hand at farming but when that failed, he moved the family to Brooklyn where he was able to find work as a carpenter. Walt was forced to leave school at age eleven to help support his family. His first jobs, as a printer's devil and typesetter, led him to a career in journalism. In between those jobs, he worked as a teacher. ("O damnation, damnation! Thy other name is school teaching.")



By 1846, Whitman was the editor of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Two years later, he was fired for supporting anti-slavery causes. He traveled to New Orleans where he honed his carpentry skills and got a firsthand look at the horrors of slavery. Returning home, he began buying old houses, repairing, and selling them for a profit.

Whitman had decided to follow his dream...to write poetry. His sister, Hannah, seemed to understand his writings but her encouragement came through the mail. She had married the landscape artist, Charles Heyde, in 1852. They lived in genteel poverty in rural Vermont on money sent by Walt. Though her husband hated Walt, he accepted his money while continuing to carefully monitor Hannah's correspondence with her older brother. Once after Hannah realized that Charles had intercepted a letter from Walt, she wrote the ominous, "Charles is not good-natured today." Hannah was a victim of domestic abuse but tried to keep the worst of her "troubles" from her brother. Heyde died in an insane asylum in 1892.

In 1855, Whitman sold a house and with his profits was able to self-publish *Leaves of Grass*, his first and perhaps greatest collection of poetry. It was startlingly modern, written in free verse, and used common American speech and slang. Walt believed when it came to love and poetry, "Sex is the root of it all..." His poems extolled love between men but they barely made a ripple in the literary world except for offended sniffs. Only Ralph Waldo Emerson praised the book. Walt's brother, George, "didn't think it worth reading." Rufus Griswold, the editor who had blackened Edgar Allen Poe's reputation, said it celebrated, "...that horrible crime not to be mentioned among Christians." Griswold also believed that Whitman was "corrupt" because of his meticulous attention to his apparel and the sweet smell of soap and cologne that followed

him.

Shortly after the book's publication, Walter Sr. died on July 11, 1855, age 65. Walt's brother, George Washington Whitman, took their mother in to live with him. He also took charge of Eddie Whitman, Walt's physically and mentally handicapped brother. Eddie needed constant tending as he was subject to epileptic seizures.

The second edition of *Leaves of Grass* was also a financial failure. In the 1860 edition, Walt added a poem, *The Children of Adam*, frankly depicting heterosexual love. He also added, *Calamus*, an erotic, homosexual love poem. Some called the author a "pretentious ass" and the book "trashy, profane, and obscene." However, because of Ralph Waldo Emerson's continued praise, many began to believe that Whitman was an author worth reading.

In the 1850s, a homosexual subculture was quietly being accepted in cosmopolitan New York. Walt was part of the group that met at Pfaff's at 847 Broadway. Amongst his peers, he was feted as the rising star of American poetry. He joined their Fred Gray Association, a group of men interested in exploring "...male-male affection." At Pfaff's, he met Fred Vaughan, who he lived with on Classon Avenue in Brooklyn for many years. Eventually, Fred left him to live a conventional, married life. Years later he wrote, "I never stole, robbed, cheated, nor defrauded any person out of anything and yet I feel that I have not been honest to myself-my family nor my friends."

On December 16, 1862, Walt saw his brother's name on a Wounded List in *The Tribune*. George had been fighting with the 51<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry. Walt found his brother in Fredericksburg, Virginia with a superficial wound. After seeing the piles of amputated limbs and the wards of suffering young men, Whitman decided to move permanently to Washington, DC where he could volunteer as a nurse until the end of the War. He was able to obtain a job in the Paymaster's Office. When friends applied to Salmon Chase for a more remunerative job for Whitman, Chase refused to help the author of such a "disreputable" volume. For the next three years, Walt used his own wages to buy little gifts for the soldiers he visited...combs, stationary, pipes, tobacco, jellies, oranges, licorice, and other treats. He carried a notebook to write down the last wishes of the dying boys and the addresses of their families.

In 1864 Walt's brother, George, was captured by Confederates and sent to Libby prison. Andrew had enlisted in the Army but was discharged when it was found that he had "laryngitis," a Nineteenth Century euphemism for consumption. He died of tuberculosis aggravated by his alcoholism (December 3, 1863). Andrew's wife, Nancy, a streetwalker, was despised by the family. Louisa Whitman said that Nancy was "about the laziest and dirtiest (sic) woman I ever want to see." The couple had two children, but in 1868 Nancy sent her 5 year-old son out to beg and the boy was hit and killed by a brewery wagon.

Since 1860, Walt's oldest brother, Jesse, had been considered insane. He had severely injured his head in a fall years earlier, forcing him to spend six months in a hospital. In 1861, he was fired from his job at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for his outbursts. On December 4, 1863, while Andrew's dead body lay in state in the parlor, Jesse threatened to "keel" his mother over and to beat his brother's daughters. Walt had no choice but to commit him to Kings County Lunatic Asylum. He died there on March 21, 1870 of complications from syphilis and alcoholism.

On July 30, 1865, Walt was fired from his job after his boss read a few pages of *Leaves of Grass*. Attorney General James Speed found him another Government position. Speed's boss, Abraham Lincoln, greatly admired the author of *Leaves*.

Towards the very end of the War, the forty five year-old poet met Peter Doyle, a twenty one year-old Irish immigrant and ex-Confederate soldier who worked as a conductor on a streetcar. The two became lovers immediately. They had an on and off again relationship from 1865 until Walt's death in 1892. Walt's young lover, Doyle, was present at Ford's theater the night of Lincoln's assassination and witnessed the murder.

Some of Whitman's reviewers insist that he had affairs with women but Doyle was quoted as saying, "I never knew a case of Walt's being bothered up by a woman..."

In 1871, George married Louisa Orr Haslam and moved to Camden, New Jersey with his brother, Eddie, and his mother, now crippled by arthritis. Mother Louisa died on May 23, 1873. Walt, who had adored his mother, slept on her pillow for years after her death.

The previous January, Walt had had a debilitating stroke. That summer, he moved in with George to recover and help care for Eddie. By 1884, George, unable to find work in Camden, bought a small farm outside the City. Walt chose to remain in town, keeping Eddie with him. He bought a small home for \$1,750 at 328 Mickle Street "...where he lived amidst a sea of chaotic papers."

Walt suffered a second stroke in 1888. He paid \$4,000 to build a large mausoleum for himself and his family at Harleigh Cemetery in Camden, visiting it often while it was under construction. He continued writing but his later poems were less sexual and more abstract. He spent the rest of his life revising *Leaves* until the final "deathbed edition" published in 1892. He died on March 26, 1892. Thousands thronged the streets of Camden for his funeral.



Next to the mausoleum is a tree. Etched deeply into its bark is the name of Jim Morrison, lead singer of The Doors, who was an ardent fan of Whitman's. Near Jim's signature is the name of another fan, Arlo Guthrie.

The Delaware Water Authority had to fight against the protests of The Catholic Holy Name Society of Camden when they wanted to name a bridge after Whitman, who the Church said used "revolting sexual imagery" in his works.

Whitman always insisted, "...do not prettify me. Include all the hells and damns." Had he only written his two great elegies to President Lincoln, "*When lilacs in the doorway last bloomed*" and "*O Captain! My Captain,*" he still would have gained a place among the immortals.

**Submitted by Judith Breitstein**

# National Register of Women's Service in the Civil War (NRWSCW):

## Woman of the Month

Helen Brainard Cole

Nurse and Government Employee, USA



Born July 20, 1838, in Oneida, New York.

Died September 4, 1931, in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Helen Brainard was born to Mark and Maria Bush Brainard, who moved their family from Oneida to Sheboygan Falls when she was a child of seven. Helen married William Cole, the scion of a pioneer Sheboygan Falls milling family, in 1858. After a year of marriage, Mr. Cole died of what is believed to be tuberculosis.

At the outbreak of War, Helen's father and brother enlisted in the US Army. Helen volunteered to serve as a nurse; however, at not quite 21, she was too young to meet the age requirement for nursing. But her persistence obtained for her the job of secretary for Dorothea Dix, Superintendent of US Army Nurses. After working for Miss Dix for one and a half years, the Superintendent declared Helen to be sufficiently mature and serious to enter nursing work.

Initially, Helen worked at Campbell Hospital in the District of Columbia, close to the US Soldiers Home. The Lincoln family used a cottage on the grounds of the Soldiers Home as a refuge. Helen's work at the Hospital attracted the cordial attention of the Lincoln

family. Later in life, Helen Cole frequently related that President and Mrs. Lincoln specifically requested her to serve as a nurse when their son Tad became ill with typhoid fever, thus endearing her to the Lincoln family. Helen worked on the team of nurses led by Rebecca Pomroy, with the team credited with saving Tad's life.

Although nurses working in Washington hospitals did not have a great deal of free time, Helen later spoke of striking up friendships with a number of celebrities during and after the War. They included John Greenleaf Whittier, Charles Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, General and Mrs. Ulysses Grant, Horace Mann, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Theodore Roosevelt, and Mary Baker Eddy, with whom she studied. She also spoke of being acquainted with John Wilkes Booth, saying that she spent an afternoon playing whist with him only a few days before the Lincoln assassination, unaware of his plans.

Helen later served in US Army hospitals in Louisville, Kentucky; Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee; and City Point, Virginia. After the War ended, she served at a hospital for African American veterans in Memphis. When that facility closed, she worked at a nursing home for women in Boston. After years of nursing, she returned in 1913 to Sheboygan Falls in order to care for her elderly parents. Selling the family farm, she moved her parents and herself into Sheboygan's Grand Hotel, where she lived for the rest of her own life. A pension from the US Government for her wartime nursing services contributed to her financial independence.

Helen became well-known as a speaker about the experiences of women during the War. She worked tirelessly for the causes of the Grand Army of the Republic and other veterans' organizations. She participated as an honored nursing veteran and daughter of a veteran in all of the GAR's Wisconsin State encampments during the remainder of her life. She was also a founding member - or early member - of a number of organizations serving Civil War veterans and patriotic causes. The organizations included:

- The National Association of Army Nurses of the Civil War – National Secretary
- Veterans of the Foreign Wars Auxiliary – Charter Member
- Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War – Honorary President and Chaplain
- Women's Relief Corps – National Delegate and Chaplain at the local- and district levels
- Daughters of the American Revolution

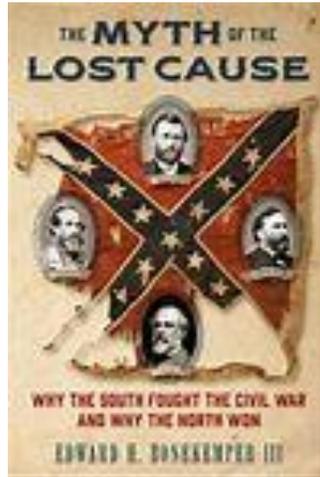
Helen died at the age of 93, as the result of a broken hip sustained during a fall on a stairway at the Hotel where she lived. Shortly before her death, she had been honored as the last surviving Civil War nurse from Wisconsin.

During her lifetime, the Helen Brainard Cole Tent (Sheboygan local chapter) of the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War was named in her honor. Two years after her death, the Tent erected a local memorial to her in the form of a granite boulder. It was proclaimed to "ever be an inspiration to all who gaze upon it to emulate the noble acts and deeds of women, and is a fitting memorial to Helen Brainard Cole."

**Submitted by the "Society for Women and the Civil War - [www.swcw.org](http://www.swcw.org)"**

## ***The Myth of the Lost Cause: Why the South Fought the Civil War and Why the North Won*, published in 2015 by Regnery History.**

Edward H. Bonekemper III had been our scheduled speaker. Sadly, he passed away before making it out here again (December 9, 2017 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania). He had spoken to us some years ago about one of his Civil War books.



In that book, Bonekemper identified that the Lost Cause Myth consisted of seven components, some of which were of course, intertwined:

1. Slavery was a benevolent institution, although a dying one by 1861.
2. States rights, not slavery, was the cause of secession, the creation of the Confederacy, and the cause of the Civil War.
3. The Confederacy had no chance of winning the Civil War, but did the best it could with the resources it had.
4. Robert E. Lee was one of the greatest generals in history.
5. James Longstreet caused Lee to lose the Battle of Gettysburg, and thus the Civil War itself.
6. Ulysses S. Grant was an incompetent butcher who won the War only by brute force and superior numbers.
7. The Union won by waging an unprecedented "total war."

Each of these components is addressed in its own chapter. Bonekemper first lays out the details of the Myth of the Lost Cause as it has been built up over the years since 1866. Historical scholarship over the last fifty years or so has steadily worked at debunking the various tenets of the Myth of the Lost Cause, but it has nonetheless exerted a tenacious grip on popular imaginations. Bonekemper draws upon that scholarship to address each one of the Myth's tenets that he identified.

The "Moonlight and Magnolias" interpretation of benevolent slave plantations, perhaps best visualized in the movie *Gone With the Wind*, has been thoroughly debunked in a

list of thoroughly researched books that is too long to put in this column. Bonekemper makes a great contribution to historical knowledge by condensing the arguments and placing them in a book that is accessible to general readers. Regnery History has a reputation for publishing right-wing leaning works, and so this book is particularly valuable because of the audience that its publisher reaches. Bonekemper is exactly right here.

Slavery was the state's right for which each Southern state seceded. Each one of them said as much in their resolutions, and their constitutions reflected that as well. The North initially fought to preserve the Union and that cause morphed into a War to end slavery, but the South seceded over Slavery from the get-go. Again, Bonekemper is exactly on the mark.

Bonekemper argued that the South could have won the War, echoing James M. McPherson's contention that nothing was inevitable about a Union victory. The South was outnumbered, but it was a vast area with considerable resources, and had the advantage of interior lines and good terrain in many places. Firepower advances at that point in time gave more advantage to defense than in earlier wars. The South refused to mobilize Black manpower for its army, and Lee's strategies and tactics in particular, wasted the manpower that was available. Johnston and Beauregard contended as late as 1874 that they could have won. I think here, Bonekemper might be on somewhat shaky ground. Nothing is inevitable, to be sure, but some things are a pretty good bet. Technology changes had indeed given increased advantages to defense, and mobility would not begin to restore the balance until late in the First World War. But in the end, it all depended on the North's will to fight.

The generalship of both Ulysses S. Grant and of Robert E. Lee has been critically re-examined in recent years. Lee's saintly reputation has not stood up well, and his war fighting methods led him to suffer higher casualty rates than he inflicted on his opponents. In particular, Gettysburg was a disaster, due in large part to Lee's mistakes and poor control of his Army. Other Confederate generals share that blame, but to a lesser degree. Lee lost at Gettysburg, not Longstreet. But scapegoats had to be found in order to exalt Lee. Bonekemper also notes the contradiction in the Myth of the Lost Cause as it relates to Gettysburg. It was supposedly fatal, and Longstreet caused it. But...if the South could never have won the War anyway, then it can't have been fatal.

Ulysses S. Grant was decisive, unlike Lee, gave clear orders, knew how to use his staff, and was not afraid to risk, unlike McClellan. Grant understood that he needed to destroy the rebel armies, and that capturing Richmond was not the main objective. Bonekemper notes that British analysts, unburdened by personal emotions, have long admired Grant, although he wasn't perfect.

The total war idea is a late addition to the Myth, appearing first in print in 1948. Bonekemper contends that the Civil War was "hard war," not "total war" as waged by Genghis Khan, Rome against Carthage, by Germany in both World Wars, and by Russia and Japan in the Second World War.

**Submitted by Bruce A. Castleman, Ph.D.**