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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

We had an exceptional meeting in January. I've had some really good feedback on how nice the ambiance was. Several liked the easy-going atmosphere. I had a good time too! Our attendance was up by 6 and I'd like to welcome new member Corbin Crutchley! He is a very busy young man and I am honored to have him take time to join us.

We still have some positions that need to be filled. We need a Secretary! I have a template that just needs the blanks filled in during the meetings. I'll type them up and submit them to George so it's an easy position.

Speaking of George, He's been our Treasurer for over 30 years!! He's kept this Round Table solvent for that long.... I don't know how long he has also taken on the newsletter too. Can anyone help him out?? It's a fun position (Editor) because you get firsthand knowledge of news and articles and you can decide what you want to put in for all to see. (We also need a Member-at-Large.)

Thanks for your support for this new year. I look forward to seeing everyone and meeting up with members I haven't seen for quite a while.

Carol Breiter, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, January 8, 2025
R Vida Cantina Restaurant, 7040 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights

ATTENDANCE – 18

MEMBERS – 13: Carol Breiter, President; Paul Ruud, Vice President; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Jean Breiter, Steve Breiter, Corbin Crutchley, Arnd Gardner, Ron Grove, (PD); Joseph (MAL) & Michelle Matalone, Patty Ruud, & Stuart & Andrea Sheffield.

GUESTS – 5: Kate Phillips, Bernie (Speaker) & Kathy Quinn, Larry Spizzirri, & Richard Spizzirri.

1. The meeting was called to order by President Carol Breiter at 7:03 PM and she led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. President Breiter shared this Day in History: In 1867, Blacks were given the right to vote; in 1877, Crazy Horse fought his last battle; in 1992, President George H. W. Bush vomited on the Japanese Prime Minister; and in 1821, General James Longstreet was born.
3. There was no old business.
4. New Business/Announcements – ZOOM service will be implemented soon. We will be looking into getting a tripod to stabilize the camera. Members who have email will be notified. Doug Bonetti is holding excellent two-hour classes from 10 AM to 12 PM at Sierra College this Spring. \$39 per person for a four week class.
5. The raffle was cancelled due to lack of prizes available. Members were encouraged to donate items of interest not just Civil War related.
6. New members and guests were introduced. One new member, Corbin Crutchley, and five guests.
7. Esteemed speaker Bernie Quinn held a competition between the Blue (right) and Grey (the right side of the room against the left side of the room) titled "Who Are They?" Photos of characters of the Civil War were shown and participants were supposed to raise their hands to answer. However during the excitement of the moment, blurting was common. The Greys won thanks to the abundant knowledge of Michelle Matalone!
8. After discussions, the evening ended at 7:54 PM.
9. The next Executive Board Meeting is Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:00 AM, at Brookfields near Madison and I-80. Members and guests are welcome.

Submitted by Jean Breiter & Carol Breiter, Interim Secretaries

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance on January 8th was \$5,056.51. There was no raffle.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Doug Bonetti will be teaching a Civil War class, the US Civil War from Lincoln to personal insights from his visits to key battlefields said to be fun, educational, and fascinating. The classes will be held at the Sierra College Campus and will be on Thursdays March 6, March 13, March 20, April 3, and April 10 from 10 AM to noon. The cost is \$39. For more information go to www.sierraolli.org . Ron Grove: rgrove916@outlook.com

Coming Programs for 2025

Date	Speaker	Topic
February 12th	"Tim Karlberg"	"LINCOLN"
March 12th	"Bernie Quinn"	"Civil War Generals"
April 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
May 14th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
June 11th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
July 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"

2025 Membership

The 2025 membership renewal is due on January 1, 2025. The dues are \$30.00 and you can renew at a 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

NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES

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

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 Round Table or the Editor. The official address of this Round Table 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.

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 Steve Johnson

Women of the Month

Mill Workers of Roswell, Georgia, CSA



Synthia Stewart



Mary Eldredge

The Roswell Mill refers to a cluster of hydropower textile mills in Roswell, Georgia. The mills produced finished textiles from the raw materials grown on nearby plantations. At its height, Roswell was the largest cotton mill in north Georgia. The first mill was founded in 1836. By the beginning of the Civil War, the complex had grown to six structures.



Martha Eldredge



Elizabeth Tucker

During the Civil War, the mills produced cotton and woolen articles for the Confederate Army -- uniforms, rope, canvas, and tent cloths. In 1864, the mills employed approximately 400 workers, most of whom were women and children. Only a handful of men -- too old, young, or infirm for military service -- worked at the mills.

Because the mills were integral to the Confederate War effort, they were an

obvious target of Federal forces moving on Atlanta. Even though the mill owners fled in advance of the Union Army, the workers kept the mills in operation until captured on July 5, 1864. Brigadier General Kenner Garrard's Cavalry destroyed all the buildings.

Upon receiving news from Garrard about the destruction of the mills, Major General William Sherman expressed his approval, and then ordered the arrest of everyone employed at the mills on grounds of treason. "I repeat my orders that you arrest all people, male and female, connected with those factories, no matter what the clamor, and let them foot it, under guard, to Marietta, whence I will send them by cars, to the North. . . . Let them take along their children and clothing, providing they have a means of hauling or you can spare them.

After a brief imprisonment in Marietta, the mill workers were loaded onto railroad cars and sent to Kentucky and Indiana. In these locations, they were left to fend for themselves and support their children with whatever menial work they could find. It is believed that most of the deported women never made it back to Georgia.

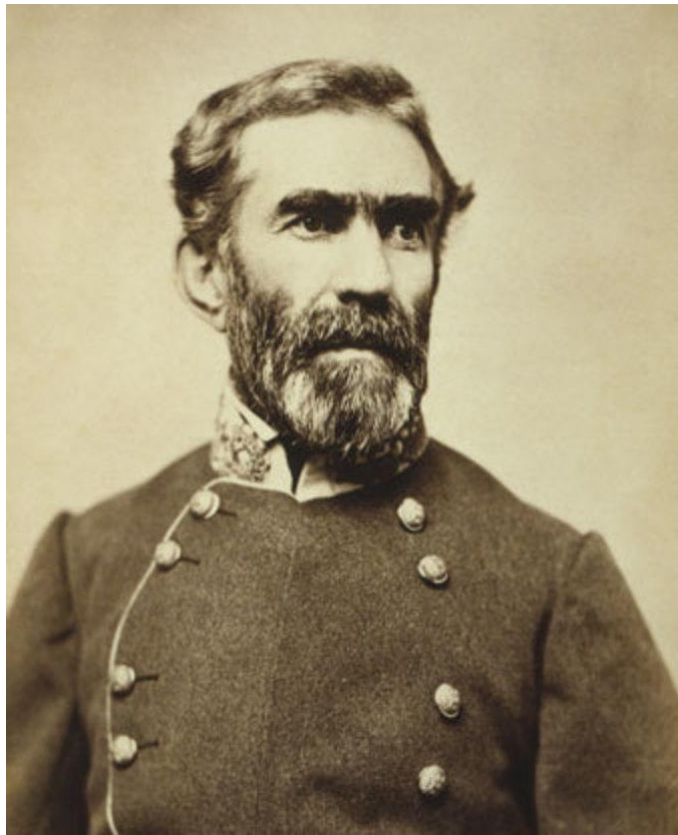


The treatment of the mill workers was met with outrage in both the Southern and Northern presses, but was then largely forgotten in the post-War years except in the area around Roswell. In 2000, a monument was erected to remember them.

Submitted by the "Society for Women and the Civil War - www.swcw.org"

The Army Commander Most Despised by His Lieutenants

Jerry McAbee, May 20, 2024, blueandgrayeducation.org



Braxton Bragg—the Confederacy's most controversial general?

American humorist Will Rogers once remarked, "I never met a man I didn't like." Obviously, Mr. Rogers never met Confederate General Braxton Bragg.

Bragg was born and raised in North Carolina. He attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating fifth in the class of 1837.

As a young officer, he was argumentative with his peers and contemptuous of authority, often to a fault. Ulysses S. Grant wrote of him: In the old Army, "when stationed at a post of several companies commanded by a field officer, he [Bragg] was himself commanding one of the companies and at the same time acting as Post Quartermaster and Commissary. ... As Company Commander, he made a requisition upon the Quartermaster—himself—for something he wanted. As Quartermaster, he declined to fill the requisition, and endorsed on the back of it his reasons for so doing." He then engaged in a series of back-and-forths with himself seeking to have the requisition filled while also denying it. Finally, he referred the issue to the Post Commander. Upon seeing it, the Commander exclaimed, "My God, Mr. Bragg, you have quarreled with every officer in the Army, and now you are quarreling with yourself."

As an Army Commander, he was the embodiment of toxic leadership. Though brave and intelligent, he was as different from Robert E. Lee in the qualities that inspire and motivate men to achieve the impossible as ineptness is from genius.

Where Lee would accept the mistakes of subordinates as failings on his part, Bragg was quick to

blame others for the slightest transgression, never shouldering any of the blame. And while Lee was humble, gentlemanly, and engendered trust and affection, Bragg was arrogant, hot-tempered, and bred mistrust and hatred. Under Bragg, initiative was extinguished. Malice and disdain flourished. His Corps and Division Commanders were hesitant to act except in receipt of written orders. Some would tacitly disobey his instructions, disrespectful of the man and his authority.



Battle of Chickamauga—one of Bragg's disasters

In the prelude to Chickamauga, the reluctance of his lieutenants to act promptly, or at all, prevented the Army of Tennessee from crippling the Army of the Cumberland at McLemore's Cove on September 10 and 11 and from striking a devastating blow two days later at Lee and Gordon's Mill.

During the Battle of Chickamauga, Bragg's incompetence to ensure his orders were properly delivered and understood all but wrecked the right wing of his Army around the Kelly Farm on the second day of fighting.

Amid the subsequent siege of Chattanooga, his lieutenants virtually revolted, prompting a visit from President Jefferson Davis to restore good order and discipline. Foolishly siding with his dear friend Bragg, President Davis returned to Richmond leaving the command climate even worse than before.

That the Confederates failed to capture Chattanooga and were instead driven from Missionary Ridge is not surprising.

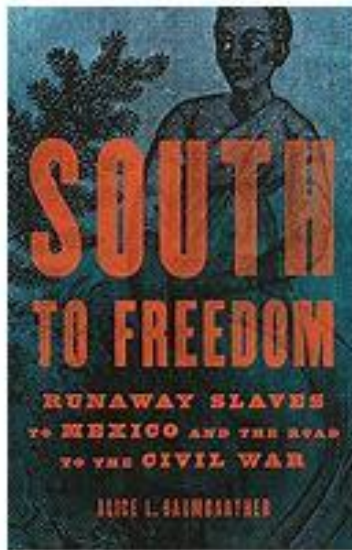
In war, generals and leadership matter. Braxton Bragg was a colossal failure in both.

Submitted by the Blue and Gray Education Association

South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War

By Alice Baumgartner. New York. Basic Books, 2020. xi + 365 pp. \$26.10 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-5416-1778-0.

Reviewed by Patrick Kelly (UTSA). Published on H-CivWar (January, 2022).
Commissioned by Niels Eichhorn.



Historians of the Texas-Mexican borderlands have long understood that the presence of an antislavery republic located on the other side of the Rio Grande profoundly shaped the trajectory of the peculiar institution in the United States, especially the Lone Star State. Rosalie Schwartz's pioneering 1975 monograph, *Across the Rio to Freedom: U.S. Negroes in Mexico*, remains the foundational work on this subject. More recently, Sarah Cornell and James Nichols have examined the importance of runaway slaves seeking freedom in Mexico. The latest addition to this growing field of borderlands scholarship is Alice Baumgartner's *South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War*, the subject of this review.

Beautifully written, *South to Freedom* discusses the entangled histories of the United States, Texas, and Mexico during the Civil War era. The first section of her book adds nuance to our understanding of the role of slavery in the increasingly fraught relations between Anglo settlers in Texas and Mexican officials in Saltillo and Mexico City as the cotton economy moved westward from the US Gulf South across the Sabine River in the 1820s. Andrew J. Torget has covered much of the same ground, especially in his excellent discussion of the struggle between pro and antislavery factions in Saltillo, the State Capital of the combined states of Coahuila y Tejas. Baumgartner's contribution to this story is her focus on the powerful antislavery currents within the National Government located in Mexico City. This emancipatory impulse culminated in a decree by Santa Anna during the Texas Revolution declaring all Texas slaves fleeing into

Mexican lines free. Baumgartner is skeptical about this decree, viewing it not as a principled act but the Mexican President's attempt to enhance his national power. Whatever his motives, the mere fact that Santa Anna believed his policy of freeing enslaved Texas slaves would be popular demonstrates the deep antipathy felt toward this institution by the vast majority the Mexican people.

After the Texas Revolution, Mexico's Congress abolished slavery in that Republic once and for all. More provocatively from the US point of view, in March 1849, the Mexican Congress passed a law declaring "the slaves of other countries" would be "free by the act of stepping on the national territory." This so-called freedom principle was later inscribed into Article 1 of the liberal Mexican Constitution of 1857, ratified, as Baumgartner smartly notes, the same year that the US Supreme Court's notorious *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision declared African Americans noncitizens. Despite the unrelenting demands of US and Texas authorities before the Civil War, Mexico City also flatly refused to consider "for a moment," lamented one US Secretary of State in the early 1850s, any extradition treaty that would return fugitive slaves to captivity north of the Rio Grande (p. 181). A signal achievement of this book is that Baumgartner offers the respect and recognition Mexico deserves but seldom receives from Civil War historians for its steadfast refusal to back down on its emancipationist policies in the face of intense US pressure. As she concludes, "On the issue of slavery, Mexico's policies, however numerous and varied, were consistent in one respect: they would not permit slavery to expand unchecked" (p. 45).

Through intensive archival work in US and Mexican archives, *South to Freedom* tells the story of the enslaved individuals in Texas and Louisiana, men such as Peter Saens, who shrewdly employed the antislavery policies of Mexico to gain their freedom. (Remarkably, with the permission of State officials in Saltillo, Saens returned to Texas and successfully smuggled his brother back across the Rio Grande to work in Northern Mexico.) Once in Mexico, she notes, the experience of the fugitive slaves was complex. When Texans crossed the border in hoping to recapture their runaways, "ordinary Mexicans took up arms against kidnappers because fugitive slaves defended the frontier, added to the labor force, and formed part of the local community" (pp. 180-181). Life in Mexico, however, was not easy for these new arrivals. Very few spoke Spanish, and most did not fancy a cuisine based on tortillas, rice, and beans so beloved by Texans of all races and ethnicities today. Many escaped slaves settled in or near the military colony located near Piedras Negras, and fought with the local militia in the constant skirmishes with the Comanche and Lipan Apache raiders that plagued Mexico's extraordinary violent Northern frontier. Others were forced to seek low-paying and often exploitative employment on "haciendas and in households" where they "were often the only people of African descent on the payroll, leaving them no choice but to assimilate into their new communities" (p. 175). Despite these hardships, their descendants live in Northern Mexico until this very day.

The story of every single enslaved individual who crossed the Rio Grande in search of freedom is one of phenomenal courage and resilience in the face of long odds. Baumgartner's attempt to connect the issue of runaway slaves who crossed South across the Rio Grande to the origins of the Civil War, however, is unconvincing. For one thing, it is unclear how many fugitives crossed the Rio Grande. Baumgartner

estimates the number at "between three and five thousand," but does not offer any evidence of how she arrived at this figure (p. 4). Baumgartner attempts to link the issue of slaves escaping to Mexico to the Wilmot Proviso, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, yet in her discussion of these momentous events the issue of fugitive slaves seeking freedom in Mexico at times disappears from her story altogether. Southerners were offended by the abolition of slavery in Mexico, as well as much of the rest of the Spanish-American republics in the New World by 1860, but there is scant evidence that the issue of runaway slaves from Texas was at the forefront for regional politicians such as John C. Calhoun who bitterly opposed the Wilmot Proviso's prohibition on the expansion of slavery into any territory acquired by the United States from Mexico. It is unclear from this book how the origins, passage, or consequences of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 were a product of the South's concern over the issue of Texas slaves seeking freedom in Mexico. Slaves crossing the Rio Grande certainly posed an irritant to US-Mexican relations. Yet, despite its provocative title, this book does not establish a strong causal relationship between this issue and the origins of the Civil War.

A far more successful argument is Baumgartner's contention that Mexico's abolition of chattel slavery laid a trap that ensnared US slaveholders after the US victory in the Mexican-American War. As she notes, the enormous area of land captured from Mexico marked the "first time that that the United States had ever incorporated territories where slavery was explicitly abolished, and Northern politicians argued that Congress had no authority to reestablish the practice." "This argument," she continues, "forged a dangerous alliance between Northern Democrats and Northern Whigs that Southern politicians feared would bring an end to slavery" (p. 147).

In ways that Civil War historians have often ignored, then, Baumgartner demonstrates that the fact that the system of African-based slavery had already been legally abolished in the territory seized from Mexico played a key role in establishing the political, legal, and moral position of the free-soil Northerners who in the 1850s would coalesce into the Republican Party. Kevin Waite's recent exploration of the determined attempt by Southerners to replant slavery in the territory seized from Mexico offers a nice complement to Baumgartner's book. As she argues, the fierce opposition of free-soilers to the efforts of Southerners to "extend slavery into the former Mexican territories ignited a sectional controversy--that is, a controversy between North and South--that would lead to the overturning of the Missouri Compromise, the outbreak of violence in Kansas, and the birth of a new political coalition, the Republican Party, whose success in the election of 1860 led to the US Civil War" (p. 6). In this sense, her book is quite persuasive in its insistence that "'American' histories of slavery and sectional controversy are, in fact, Mexican histories too" (p. 13).

Submitted by Bruce A. Castleman, Ph.D.