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2020 Officers:

Dennis Kohlmann, President
(916) 726-4432
gkohlma@aol.com

Anne M. Peasley, IPP
(530) 320-5112
aPeasley22@gmail.com

James Juanitas, Vice
President
(916) 731-4139
jcjuanitas@aol.com

VACANT,
Secretary

George W. Foxworth,
Treasurer
(916) 362-0178
gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net

Bernard Quinn,
Program Director
bwqcrypto@gmail.com

Paul G. Ruud, MAL
(530) 886-8806
paulgruud@gmail.com

Richard E. Sickert, MAL
(916) 564-4608
r.sickert@comcast.net

VACANT,
Editor

SCWRT Website
www.sacramentocwrt.com

Kim Knighton, Webmaster
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

Something Nick Scivoletto said at the beginning of our last meeting got me to thinking. Some stories are so good that if they aren't true they should be. In the early summer of 1861, regular army officers in California were moving through Los Angeles on their way East.

In her biography of her husband, Winfield Scott Hancock, Elmira Hancock tells of a party she held for all their friends. These men, who had served together over 10 years and had fought in the Mexican War together, were now leaving California. Some to the South and some to the East. Close friends like Albert Sidney Johnston, Richard Garnett, and Lewis Armistead bid their final goodbyes to the Hancocks.

Johnston would be killed at Shiloh. Garnett and Armistead would battle Hancock's forces at Gettysburg. Neither survived.

The last thing for the evening was Mrs. Johnston singing a sad Irish ballet, "Kathleen Mavourneen." At this, she said "Hearts were filled with sadness over the surrender of lifelong ties."

Dennis Kohlmann, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, February 12, 2020
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 28:

MEMBERS – 25: Dennis Kohlmann, President; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Steve Andrews, James Armstrong, Harvey & Marsha Cain, Mark Carlson, Arnd Garnter, Donald J. Hayden, Wayne & Nina Henley, Arnold Kunst, Joseph & Michelle Matalone, Bernie Quinn, Program Director; Paul Ruud, (MAL); Nancy Samuelson, Tracy Samuelson, Kris Scivoletto, Nicholas Scivoletto, Richard Sickert (MAL), Peggy Tveden, Ray Valdez, Michael Werner, John Zasso.

GUESTS – 3: Dennis Deck, Steve Kenworthy, Robert Orr.

1. President Dennis Kohlmann led the Pledge. President Kohlmann recognized new members and guests. The raffle was conducted by Nicholas Scivoletto.
2. President Kohlmann announced that we have received no information about the 2020 West Coast Civil War Conference. Robert Orr announced the March 20 -- 22 Re-Enactment at Knights Ferry, East of Oakdale on Highway 120, towards Yosemite National Park.
3. Robert Orr & Steve Kenworthy gave an outstanding "Civil War Music" program. They used a violin/fiddle and a guitar, common instruments during the War.
4. Some of their selections: Golden Slippers, Johnny Reb, Year of Jublio/Kingdom, Come/Dixie, When Johnny Comes Marching Home, Battle Cry of Freedom, Minstrel Boy, Stonewall, Camel Farewell to the Red Barbie, Battle of Franklin, Battle Hymn of the Republic, Bonnie Blue Flag, 8th of January, Over the Waterfall, etc.
5. Their closing selection was Ashokan Farewell, the theme song in the Ken Burns' 1990 documentary, "The Civil War." There was a short discussion about Ashokan Farewell, the fact that it is not a Civil War era song.
6. In the early 1980s, Jay Ungar and his wife and fellow musician, Molly Mason, were running the Ashokan Camp, a summer arts school specializing in fiddle and dancing, at the Ashokan Field Campus of State University of New York--New Paltz. Ungar composed the tune—Mason would later give it its name—to commemorate the conclusion of the 1982 session of the Camp. The Ashokan Reservoir is in the Catskill Mountains, Upstate New York, the body of water for which the song got its name.
7. Ungar had traveled through Scotland earlier in the 1982 summer, and he wanted to compose a tune in the style of a Scottish lament—something that would capture the sense of sadness that the Camp, and all the camaraderie and community and joy it represented to him, would be ending. Ungar is pleased of the fact that "a Scottish lament was written by a Jewish guy from the Bronx."
8. And so Ungar and Mason—and their group, Fiddle Fever—recorded the song, including it as part of their 1983 album *Waltz of the Wind*. In 1984, Burns was on the lookout for songs that could serve as the soundtrack for his documentary. He heard Fiddle Fever's Album with "Ashokan Farewell." He got in touch with Ungar and Mason and asked for permission to use the song in the documentary. They consented and actually played many of the songs in the documentary.
9. *The Civil War*, in the end, was 11 hours long; nearly an hour of that time—59 minutes and 33 seconds—features some version of "Ashokan Farewell."
10. The next Board Meeting will be Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 10 AM, at Brookfield's Restaurant.

George W. Foxworth for Vacant, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance on February 12th was \$5,162.88. The raffle brought in \$38.00. Many thanks to Nicholas Scivoletto, members, and guests.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2020

Date	Speaker	Topic
March 11th	Dennis Kohlmann	"Battle of Sabine Pass
April 8th	Joe Maxwell & Jack Tucker	"What Happened After the War? Flights of the Confederates"
May 13th	Carl Guarneri	"Lincoln's Informer"
June 10th	John Scales	"The Campaigns & Battles of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest"
July 8th	Bernard Quinn	"Lee's Sharpshooters"
August 12th	Arnd Gartner	"Union Intelligence Services"

2020 Membership

The 2020 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2020. The dues are \$30.00 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

Please 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:

gwofforth@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.

NORTH & SOUTH IS BACK!

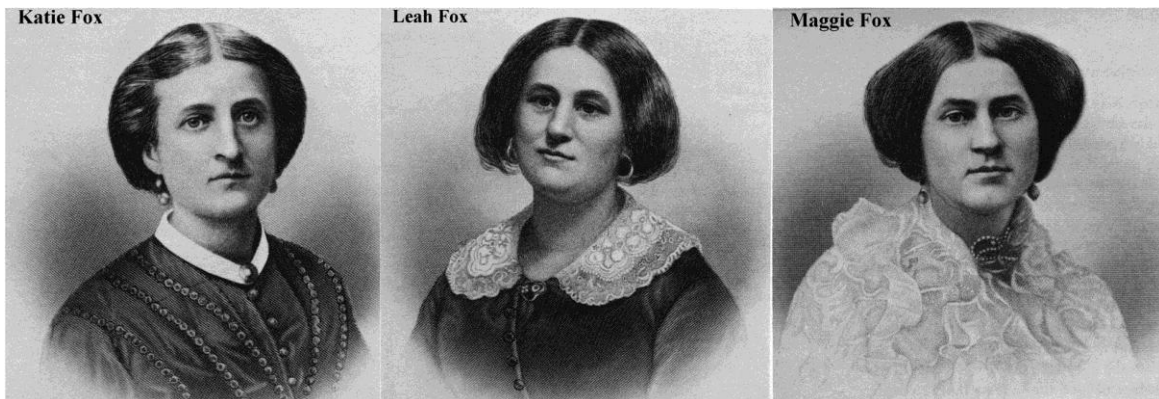
Re-Launched in July 2019, three issues have already appeared by December 31, 2019. Each 100-page issue is packed with 7 - 8 articles plus the familiar Departments--Knapsack, Crossfire, and Briefings-- and a new one, *Civil Warriors*, that looks at little known participants in the War.

Lead article in Issue 4 is a detailed examination of whether Meade could have - and should have - trapped and destroyed the Army of Northern Virginia. (Editor says yes, 98%.) There will be a follow-up discussion article.

To subscribe go to northandsouthmag.com or call Keith on (559) 260 3852 (Pacific time).

The Fox Sisters

John and Margaret Fox resumed their marriage after many years apart due to his drunkenness. Now sober, John purchased a small house in Hydesville, New York, population forty. John and Margaret's daughter, Leah, older than their other children by some 20 years, had been widowed and now lived and earned her living in Rochester teaching music. Their son, Dave, worked on a farm in Auburn. The two youngest daughters, Maggie, 14, and Kate, 11, lived with them.



On December 18, 1847, the family moved into their new home. The house was rumored to be haunted. Previous residents claimed to have heard sounds of furniture moving, windows opening and closing, raps, and thuds. Knocks were heard at the front door but when it was opened, no one was there. Odd sounds kept the Foxes awake their first few weeks. Then on March 31, 1848, Kate snapped her fingers two times and ordered Mr. Splitfoot, a euphemism for the devil in the 1840s, "to do as I do." Immediately, two snaps were heard. In the following days, Maggie joined her sister in channeling the raps, snaps, and communicating with the dead.

The heyday of Spiritualism had begun in the tiny town of Hydesville, born in the minds of two greedy little girls and fostered by their avaricious older sister. It didn't stop growing until all three sisters were dead.

The girls had worked out a system to communicate with the spirits: one rap meant "yes," two raps meant "no." A number of raps would correspond with a letter of the alphabet. Hordes of people began descending on the Fox home demanding to speak to loved ones who were on "the other side of the veil." It became impossible to live normally with bereaved neighbors banging on the doors.

The Foxes sent Kate to live with her brother, Dave, in Auburn. Maggie took refuge with Leah. The girls began to have "sittings," later known as "séances," in their new homes. So many people were clamoring to see them that they rented a hall that sat 400. The girls put on their demonstration. No fraud was detected but afterwards, Kate and Maggie were taken backstage, disrobed, and examined. Nothing was found that could have produced the sounds.

Leah now announced that she, too, was a medium. With herself as manager, she arranged for the Fox sisters to tour the United States. Their first stop was New York City. They charged a dollar a person and offered private meetings for their wealthier patrons. Horace Greeley invited the sisters to his home. He had lost his five year old son to typhoid fever and his wife was a great believer in this new religion of Spiritualism. It was through Greeley that the girls met and gave readings to some of the most well-known people of the era, William Cullen Bryant, James Fennimore Cooper, William Lloyd Garrison, and P.T. Barnum. Though Harriet Beecher Stowe claimed to distrust mediums, she could not pass up the chance to speak to her dead children. After a séance in the White House with the Fox sisters, Jane, the wife of President Franklin Pierce, claimed to have seen her lost son, Bennie, two nights in succession. Afterwards, she said that "her soul felt calm."

While Leah remained in New York giving séances, Kate and Maggie continued their tour. They began to include music and spirit writing in the séances. At times, the raps grew violent and poltergeists were said to attack members of the audience. More than once, Kate and Maggie were physically attacked by townspeople and run out of town. Yet in spite of the distrust and hostility towards mediums, the movement kept growing.

In 1857, Maggie met her future husband, the Arctic explorer, Elisha Kent Kane. He offered to send her to school if she quit the tour and convert to Catholicism. They married in a secret Quaker ceremony which did not include a minister or the taking of any vows. Kane died suddenly that same year. His family refused to accept Maggie or allow her to attend the funeral. She began drinking to drown her sorrows. Desperate for money, she soon joined Kate on the stage again. Meanwhile, for several months Kate had been living with the Greeley family. On his death bed, Greeley blessed the Fox sisters insisting, "They have prepared me for this hour."

It has been estimated that over 750,000 soldiers died during and shortly after the Civil War. Mary Lincoln opened the door to Spiritualism on a mass scale in the country when she invited mediums into the White House after little Willie's death. Mediums grew rich from emotionally vulnerable parents who wanted to contact their lost sons and locate their bodies. The majority of mediums were women. It was often their first chance to exercise leadership unencumbered by

male watchdogs. The thought of women blatantly displaying themselves on stage was anathema to many. But now, women began to give public lectures to mixed audiences, something that was unheard of before this time. Many blamed the new "Spiritualist religion" on "female insanity," ie: a woman's reproductive system. Doctors blamed the madness on tilted uteruses. In February 1872, Mary Todd Lincoln contacted Maggie Fox to hold a séance so she could speak to her husband, the deceased President. Robert Lincoln used this incident during his mother's insanity trial as an example of her mental instability.

Kate and Maggie had become famous beyond their wildest dreams. Money was pouring in but the two sisters began to resent Leah for forcing them to work so hard. Leah pushed Maggie hardest as she was more talented than Kate. Leah had become an astute business woman but competition was eating away at their profits. Older and savvier women were entering the field and using new tricks aided by the use of modern technology. While some truly believed in spirits, others were without conscience, knowingly cashing in on the grief of families. In the mid-Nineteenth Century, the deaths of children under five years old accounted for more than half the deaths in the United States. The number of Civil War deaths were appalling. Death was everywhere.

Perhaps from overwork or guilt, Kate joined Maggie in drinking heavily before and after their private sittings and sessions on stage.

Sensing an untapped market, the sisters traveled to England where they soon had a large following. In December 1872, Kate married Henry Jencken, a devout believer in Spiritualism. In 1885, they returned to the United States. Henry Jencken died of a stroke that same year. It began to be difficult for the sisters to find work due to their drinking. In 1888, Kate was arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct and her two sons were taken from her. Leah, abandoned by her first husband, widowed by her second, had married her third husband, Daniel Underhill, and turned her back on her sisters. Angry at Leah, and backed up by Kate, Maggie accepted \$1,500 to appear on the stage of the new Academy of Music on East 14th Street in New York City and debunk Spiritualism.

On October 21, 1888, Maggie began, "I am here tonight as one of the founders of Spiritualism to denounce it as an absolute falsehood ..., as the flimsiest of superstitions, the most wicked blasphemy known to this world." She went on to relate how she and Kate conjured up their "special effects," tying apples to strings and bumping them on the floor to cause rappings and thumps. With practice, they learned to manipulate the joints of their fingers, knees, toes, and ankles to make raps and loud pops. Maggie took off a shoe and sock and gave

a demonstration. She explained that she had learned to do “spirit writing” using her feet. In the audience, Kate applauded.

Spiritualists condemned the confession. The newspapers said it was the “death blow” to Spiritualism. One year later, destitute, Maggie tried to recant her confession and work at a séance table again. She was unsuccessful.

Kate drank herself to death. She was 55 when she died on July 2, 1892. Maggie followed her a year later on March 8, 1893, aged 59, also dying from complications due to alcoholism. Both penniless, their common grave in Cypress Hill Cemetery in Brooklyn was paid for by friends.



Leah died on November 1, 1890, aged 77. She is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

After their deaths, the movement died away.

Submitted by Judith Breitstein

American Civil War Association

*Invites You
To Enjoy and Participate in
“Knights Ferry Civil War Days”*

“Where the Civil War comes alive”

Main Event: Sat. & Sun, March 21st & 22nd, 2020

Gates open at 9:00 AM -5:00 PM

Battles Times: Saturday 1:00 PM & 4:00 PM

Sunday 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM



“Located at the Historic Knights Ferry Covered Bridge”

Stanislaus River Parks located in Knights Ferry, 17968 Covered Bridge Rd., Oakdale, CA 95361
Twelve miles east of Oakdale on State Route 108/120. GPS Location: 37 49 19 N x 120 39 4 W.

***“Step back in time and experience how life was for the Soldiers, Women and children,
during the most trying time in history. Hear the sounds of the Battles and Experience
Camp Life and enjoy living history!”***

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