President’s Message:

At our most recent meeting we were presented another fine discussion by Professor Sherri Patton, this time on Southern Women in the Civil War. Her technique of encouraging audience participation was much appreciated and apparently greatly enjoyed. Her City College students are fortunate to have such a dynamic teacher and we trust she will be willing to return to enlighten us again.

The plans continue for the November conference which along with our Elk Grove CWRT colleagues we shall sponsor. Paul Ruud has done an exemplary job chairing the planning committee consisting of Silver Williams, Carol Breiter, George Foxworth, Dennis Kohlmann, Bob Hanley, Richard Sickert, and yours truly. All efforts are underway to make this one of the best. Beginning with this issue I shall introduce the biography of Dr. Craig Symonds and continue with each speaker in subsequent issues. The topic is 1861-The War Begins, the dates November 11-13 and the site the Doubletree Hotel, on Arden Way. I encourage all to attend since these meetings are the highlights of each year and provide an opportunity to meet and hear outstanding nationally recognized authorities. Registration forms are to be mailed as well as sent electronically and will also be posted on our website; www.sacramentocwrt.com.

The annual Gibson Ranch Civil War weekend is May 20-23 and we still need a few more volunteers to escort the schoolchildren on Friday and to greet visitors at our booth on Saturday and Sunday. If interested, I can be reached at 485-1246. George Foxworth attended The Ranch’s Opening Day on April 23rd and has included a special report on the festivities in this issue. Many efforts have been made to maintain this traditional weekend at Gibson Ranch and if you have never been there it is an experience not to be missed.

The Civil War Trust announced the Pennsylvania Gaming Commission denied the application for the gambling casino near Gettysburg National Park. Many noted authorities, historians, politicians, and notables encouraged this decision along with the majority of Pennsylvanians. The Trust worked especially hard to prevent this potential travesty.

Our next meeting is May 11, 7PM, at Sam’s Hof Brau. We are adding a few minutes discussion of 1861 events presented by Vice-President Silver Williams prior to the speaker’s discussion. We are fortunate to welcome John McKinsey who has recently authored The Lincoln Secret who will discuss his research and findings in seeking information about this little known question of history. Don’t miss this one! Come early for dinner and camaraderie.

Don Hayden, President
MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, April 13, 2011
Hof Brau Restaurant, 2500 Watt Ave, Sacramento

ATTENDANCE – 42

MEMBERS – 35
Don Hayden, President  Mitchell Cnota  Dennis Kohlmann, PD  Roxanne Spizzirri
Silver Williams, Vice President  James Cress  Lowell Lardie  Brent Ten Pas, Editor
George Foxworth, Treasurer  Jerry Cress  Grace Long  Robert Williams
Edie Keister, Secretary  Alan Geiken  Robert Moore  Maxine Wollen
James Armstrong  Bob Hanley, MAL  Anne Peasley  John Zasso
Joan Beitzel  Scottie Hayden  Rich Peasley  Guest
George Beitzel  Nancy Hayden  Horst Penning  Gail Cretcher
Marsha Cain  Eric Henderson  Robert Schroder  Keith Cretcher
Harvey Cain  Nina Henley  Nicholas Scivoletto  Alfredo DeLeon
Ardith Cnota  Wayne Henley  Richard Sickert, MAL  Albert DeLeon
  Sherri Patton
  Richard Spizzirri
  Larry Spizzirri

1. Meeting started at 7:05. President Hayden welcomed guest and members.

2. Flyers for the grand Re-opening at Gibson Ranch were passed out. The movie “The Conspirator,” regarding the trials of Lincoln's assassins, was discussed. A volunteer sign-up list to work at our booth or help with visiting school kids at Gibson Ranch was passed around.

3. Vice President Silver Williams introduced our speaker Sheri Patton, who spoke on “Southern Women in the Civil War;” and discussed their shortcomings, ability to survive the war, while the men were gone. She spoke on both classes- rich and poor. Thank you Sheri, it was fascinating.

4. Raffle was held and meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Edie Keister
Secretary

Treasurer’s Report

The cash balance following the April 13, 2011 meeting was $2,157.20. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in $57.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer
A Report on the Return of Gibson Ranch Park
By George W. Foxworth

Gibson Ranch Park in Elverta, California, re-opened Saturday, April 23, 2011 with a grand celebration. The ceremony began with the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department’s mounted unit carrying the colors and a band (Peter Neumann and the Bayside Woodland Band of Woodland, CA) played the Star Spangled Banner. The master of ceremonies was Hal Morris, President of the Rio Linda Chamber of Commerce. The first speakers were Roberta MacGlashan (Chair) and Jimmy R. Yee, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. Sacramento County Sheriff Scott Jones was followed by Lois Meidinger, Dawn Lucas, and Keith Weber. Keith Weber, Chairperson of the newly formed “Friends of Gibson Ranch,” issued a resolution to honor Mr. Doug Ose & GRP LLC 2011 for stepping up to the plate and taking on the re-opening and maintaining of the Park. Mr. Ose gave a few words after accepting the resolution. Later, the Ben Ali Keystone Cop Patrol made Sheriff Jones an honorary member of their Patrol.

After the opening ceremony, the carnival continued. Activities included pony rides, hayrides, free face painting, Mother Goose story-telling, balloon art, bounce houses, petting zoo, cake walk and auction, Painted Ladies Rodeo Performance-horseback drill team performance, bag pipe performance, horse classes, ice cream eating contest, and free ice cream social. Special displays included the Sacramento Area Search and Rescue, Western Truck Parts and Peterbilt Trucks, Antique Fire Truck presented by Roger Mitchell, National Civil War Association (NCWA), Sacramento Metro Engine 117, Sacramento Metro Firefighting Helicopter, and food by Big Joe’s BBQ. The Sacramento Metro Fire Department helicopter was loved by everybody, especially when the aircraft took off and circled the Ranch twice as they returned to their base, McClellan Field. In addition to several hundred people at the celebration, several hundred other people were using the Park for barbeques, picnics, and fishing.

The NCWA Booth was staffed by Charlotte Mirabella and Bob Van der Pool of the James River Squadron; Eric Henderson, Robert Schroeder, and Sean Taylor of Company B, 7th West Virginia; and Joe Fiffick and Mike Sanders of Company A, 71st Pennsylvania. The following SCWRT members attended: Eric Henderson, Robert Schroeder, and George W. Foxworth. Many thanks to all volunteers and attendees.

The weather conditions were mostly dry, mostly overcast, windy, cool, and pleasant.

The Gibson Ranch ceremony was a complete success and Mr. Doug Ose, “Friends of Gibson Ranch,” L & M Concession Management, and many others are commended for their great work. We look ahead to the 13th Annual 2011 Civil War re-enactment at the Ranch on May 20 – 22, 2011. The NCWA will present “Sesquicentennial Anniversary Commencement of the American Civil War.” Please join us.

Civil War 2011
Gibson Ranch
May 21st & 22nd

For more information, please visit;

http://www.gibson-ranch.com/civil_war_2010.htm
THIS REPUBLIC OF SUFFERING; 
Death and the American Civil War. 
By Drew Gilpin Faust. (New York: Knopf, 2008. 346 pp.)

(First published in Washington Post on February 24, 2008)

Professional military men of the late 19th century were generally unimpressed by America's Civil War. "A contest in which huge armed rabbles chased each other around a vast wilderness," Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke contemptuously sniffed, concluding there was nothing for the world's armies to learn from such an unmilitary spectacle that had so little to do with the established art of war.

But in 1901 a young member of the British Parliament accurately read the war's central and overwhelming implication -- one that would be borne out all too well in the bloody century of industrialized slaughter to come. "The wars of peoples," warned the 26-year-old Winston Churchill, "will be more terrible than those of kings."

The American Civil War was the first "war of peoples," and as Drew Gilpin Faust vividly demonstrates, the unprecedented carnage of this first modern war overwhelmed society's traditional ways of dealing with death. The customs, religion, rhetoric, logistics -- even statistical methods -- of mid-19th century America were unequal to slaughter on such a scale. How American society attempted to come to terms with death that broke all the rules about dying, and how the nation ultimately did -- and did not -- face up to this new reality of war are Faust's haunting and powerful themes. If nothing else, this finely written book is a powerful corrective to all the romantic claptrap that still envelops a war that took as many American lives, 620,000, as all other wars from the Revolution to Korea combined.

The extent to which the Civil War found America unprepared to deal with its carnage at the most basic levels is fascinatingly horrifying. "As late as Second Bull Run, in August 1862, a Union division took the field without a single ambulance available for removal of casualties," Faust writes. "Burying the dead after a Civil War battle seemed always to be an act of improvisation." Two and a half weeks after Antietam, unfathomable numbers of corpses lay unburied, stacked in rows a thousand long or still scattered about the field. Coffins were practically unheard of; no provision of any kind had been made by military authorities. A Union surgeon who took upon himself responsibility for burying "those he could not save" after Gettysburg had to send out a foraging party to locate a shovel.

Nor had provision been made for notifying families of the deaths of husbands, sons, brothers. The chaotic record-keeping led to many heartrending incidents of survivors of battles erroneously reported dead, or vice versa. "I read my own obituary," recalled a Confederate soldier. Union private Henry Struble, misidentified as a soldier killed and buried at Antietam, laid flowers on the grave of the unknown soldier occupying his place every year afterward on Memorial Day.

Charitable organizations attempted to fill the information void but were overwhelmed by the task. After the bloody battles in Virginia in the spring of 1864, the Washington "Directory Office" of the volunteer Sanitary Commission was besieged day after day by distraught families and friends seeking to learn the fate and whereabouts of loved ones.

The increasingly helpless efforts of comrades, chaplains, families and compassionate onlookers to maintain the customary forms of solace and dignified treatment of the dead are the poignant backdrop to Faust's exploration of the byways of death in wartime. "I insisted upon attending every dead soldier to the grave and reading over him a part of the burial service," wrote a Confederate nurse, Fannie Beers, in the fall of 1862. "But it had now become impossible. The dead were past help; the living always needed succor."

Soldiers and families alike tried hard to cling to the Victorian notion of the "Good Death," so much so, observes Faust, that "letters describing soldiers' last moments on Earth are so similar it is as if their authors had a checklist in mind." In the mid-19th century, a dying person was expected to pass away
surrounded by family, conscious of and at peace with
his impending fate, reconciled to his Maker, leaving
inspiring last words to be remembered by. War,
especially modern war, shattered all those
assumptions. Death was often unpredictable,
excruciatingly painful, absurd and squalid, the dying
departing full of fury and agony. It came far from
home; and when delivered by explosive artillery shell,
it sometimes did not even leave any identifiable
remains. A man could be literally "blown to atoms," wrote a Union chaplain at Gettysburg -- a fate, Faust
observes, that civilians found incomprehensible.

Faust shows how American institutions adapted to the
staggering burden of this new kind of war and
wholesale death with a blend of can-do
humanitarianism, pragmatic improvisation, mawkish
sentimentality, political cant, commercial hucksterism
and downright fraud. Freelance embalmers flocked to
battlefields in the aftermath of the fighting. "Bodies
taken from Antietam Battle Field and delivered to
Cars or Express Office at short notice and low rates,"
read the business card of one entrepreneur. "Bodies
Embalmed by us NEVER TURN BLACK! But retain
their natural color and appearance," boasted another.
In 1863, a Washington undertaker was imprisoned on
charges of making a practice of recovering and
embalming dead soldiers without permission and then
extorting payment from families that wanted the
bodies returned.

Faust convincingly demonstrates that the trauma of
the Civil War revolutionized the American military's
approach to caring for the dead and notifying families.
After the war, a massive and superbly organized effort
by the War Department to recover, identify and
rebury Union dead in newly established national
cemeteries was an act of atonement for the nation's
failings during the war itself.

Faust is less convincing in making a case that the
war's confrontation with death produced a permanent
transformation in American belief, politics, character,
habits of mind and modes of expression -- something
that Paul Fussell did so insightfully for World War I
in The Great War and Modern Memory. She notes,
for example, Ambrose Bierce's bitingly ironic humor,
which grew very directly out of his war experience,
but it would be interesting and important to learn how
this brand of cynicism went over with most people.

She suggests that the war's unprecedented suffering
posed a challenge to religious faith, but beyond
offering a series of interesting anecdotes she never
really presents a clear argument that the war, in the
end, had a lasting effect one way or another on
American religiousness.

But the real lesson may be the remarkable human
capacity to forget and gloss over even the ugliest
realities. Walt Whitman, who visited tens of
thousands of wounded soldiers during the war and
came to know its death and terrible suffering
firsthand, wrote (in a speech he never delivered) the
famous words, "The real war will never get in the
books." But he then added, "I say will never be
written -- perhaps must not and should not be." Those
who read Faust's powerful account of "the real war"
will almost surely beg to differ.

Stephen Budiansky is the author of "The Bloody Shirt:
Terror After Appomattox."
Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the US Navy, Navalists and Anti-Navalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States, 1775-1827, and numerous others. In 2008, Dr. Symonds' book Lincoln and his Admirals received numerous literary prizes, and his most recent work is The Civil War at Sea.

While also a frequent speaker at West Coast Civil War conferences, Dr. Symonds provided invaluable assistance in helping us plan the last conference SCWRT hosted in 2006: The War on the Water. One will also hear Dr. Symonds voice, accompanied by notable historian James McPherson providing commentary under the Special Features of the Director's Cut Gettysburg.

A native Californian, Dr. Symonds matriculated from the University of California, Los Angeles and completed his graduate studies at the University of Florida. He and wife Marylou reside in Annapolis and have a son and grandson in Berkeley.

We are delighted to have them join us once again this Fall.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., future chief Justice, was wounded three times during the Civil War: in the chest at Ball’s Bluff, in the back at Antietam and in the heal at Chancellorsville.

We have the distinct pleasure of Dr. Craig L. Symonds as our keynote speaker for November's West Coast Civil War Conference. Not only a renowned authority on the Civil War, but Dr. Symonds is an outstanding teacher who has accumulated many awards during his long tenure as professor of history at The US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Although recently retired in 2005, Dr. Symonds will return to the Academy this year as the first recipient of a newly endowed annual chair for emeritus professors.

Dr. Symonds is the author of many prize winning books including biographies of Joseph E. Johnston, Patrick Cleburne, and Franklin Buchanan, as well as The American Heritage History of the Battle of Gettysburg. His expertise on Naval History is displayed in his works such as Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History, The
**MAY**

**DURING THE CIVIL WAR**

1861

6th Arkansas secedes, Davis approves state of war between the US & CS
20th North Carolina secedes
23rd Virginia secedes

1862

6 & 7th Battle of Shilo
19th Battle of South Mills
29th New Orleans surrenders to Union

1863

1st - 2nd Battle of Chancellorsville
10th "Stonewall" Jackson Dies
16th Battle of Champion's Hill
18th Siege of Vicksburg begins

1864

5th Battle of the Wilderness Begins
12th Battle of "Bloody Angle" at Spotsylvania Court House

---

**CIVIL WAR BLOG SPOTLIGHT**

**That a Nation Might Live**

Dr. Charles Ross and Dr. David Coles of Longwood University, located in Farmville, Va., host a blog sponsored by the university that celebrates the Civil War's Sesquicentennial Anniversary by focusing on "events leading up to and during the United States Civil War." A weekly podcast discusses "significant events that occurred roughly 150 years ago on those same dates." These podcasts can easily be listened to on the website or you may subscribe and have it delivered to your email inbox.

You can find That a Nation Might Live at http://civilwar150.longwood.edu/