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May, 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 until further notice.**

**Vacant, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, April 13, 2022**  
**DENNY'S RESTAURANT, 3520 AUBURN BOULEVARD, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDANCE – 17:**

**MEMBERS – 15:** James Juanitas, Vice President; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Carol Breiter, Jean Breiter, Harvey & Marsha Cain, Arnd Garnter, Ron Grove, Christopher Highsmith, Kim Grace Long, Bernie Quinn, Program Director; Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri, Peggy Tveden, & John Zasso.

**GUESTS – 2:** Ted Savas, Jennifer Jutovsky.

1. Vice President James Juanitas led the Pledge. Vice President Juanitas recognized new members and guests. The raffle was conducted by Christopher Highsmith.
2. Vice President Juanitas introduced the speaker, Ted Savas. Mr. Savas's topic was "1861 and the Big Bluff."
3. George Washington Rains was born in New Bern, NC in 1817. He graduated from West Point in 1842 as third out of a class of 56; as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. In the next year, he transferred to the 4th US Artillery Regiment and then became an Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology back at West Point.
4. He participated in the Mexican-American War, fighting at many battles. For his services, he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant and brevetted Captain. Over the next years he frequently changed stations and often served on recruiting duty. The full Captain's promotion came in February 1856 when he was stationed in New York but he resigned his commission half a year later.
5. Rains became a proprietor of the Washington & Highland Iron Works in Newburgh, NY and became a patent holding engineer for steam engines and boilers. He also married local Frances Josephine Ramsell (1838–1919) with whom he had a daughter, Fanny Powell Rains.
6. When the Civil War began, Rains joined the Confederate Army. He became a Major in the Ordnance Department and was tasked to procure, and prospect for, gunpowder ingredients and to initiate the production. In 1862, he was transferred the Bureau of Nitre & Mining. Rains was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and went to Augusta, Georgia, and established the Confederate Powderworks at the Augusta Arsenal. Inspired by, and learning from British material, his methods and inventions provided for comparably safe and efficient production. At its peak, the Powderworks regularly produced about 7,000 pounds (3,175kg) a day, more than 2,750,000 pounds (1,247 tons) throughout the War, making it the second-largest gunpowder factory in the world at that time. Rains was promoted to Colonel on July 12, 1863. Rains also commanded the local defense regiment and led it during Sherman's March to the Sea.
7. Shortly before the War ended, he additionally received command of the ordnance depots and arsenals in the lower Confederacy. In 1865, he became a Brigadier General in the Georgia Militia and he also kept his Confederate rank. His older brother, Gabriel J. Rains, was an 1827 West Point graduate and served as a Confederate Brigadier General also. The older Rains had specialized in the creation and use of mines, booby traps, and torpedoes; and headed the Torpedo Bureau. Though not working together, the brothers were collectively known as *Bomb Brothers* while George Rains on his own had been called the *Chief Chemist of the Confederacy*.
8. After the War, George Rains stayed in Augusta and chose an academic life; he lectured as Professor of Chemistry at the Medical College of Georgia. He became its Dean, retired in 1894, and returned to Newburgh, NY in 1898. He died there on March 21, 1898, and was buried at Saint George's Cemetery.
9. The next Board Meeting is Wednesday, May 11, 2022.

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

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance on April 13th was \$4,565.77. The raffle brought in \$31.00. Many thanks to Christopher Highsmith, members, and guests.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2022

Date	Speaker	Topic
May 11th	"Carl Guarneri"	"Lincoln's Informer"
June 8th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
July 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
August 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
September 14th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
October 12th	"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:

[gwofforth@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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.

## **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 Steve Johnson**

## Angelo M. Crapsey

The Union Army admitted to having approximately 391 soldiers commit suicide either during or immediately after the Civil War. The C.S.A. kept no records of this sort probably because they viewed suicide as an act of cowardice or insanity. (When the Southern firebrand, Edmund Ruffin, blew his brains out because he refused to live under vile "Yankee Rule," it was lauded as the act of a patriot.)

Angelo M. Crapsey was born to the Reverend John Crapsey and his wife, Mercy, on December, 9, 1842 in Roulette, Potter County, Pennsylvania. Mercy died of a fever when Angelo was just nine years old. Not long after his wife's death, the Reverend Crapsey was caught up in the wave of religious fervor that was sweeping the country. He began to speak in tongues and "mesmerize" his followers. John and his ardent parishioners beheld visions and heard the most "beautifullest music" from the heavens.

The Reverend developed a following, Crapseytes, who clung to his every word. The church floor would shake when they began to dance and wail and testify during his sermons. Some of the Reverend's church members began to call his sermons "an abomination to a civilized community" and the preacher "a rattlesnake." John Crapsey was forced to leave his pulpit in the Lutheran Church. He gathered a new congregation and ordained himself.

Angelo was not impressed by religion and never took any part in his father's services. He was ardent about only one thing...supporting the Government of the United States in the coming Civil War.



On May 30, 1861, 18 year-old Angelo was mustered into Company I, 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Rifles. Also known as the 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Reserves and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, they would come to be familiarly known as "The Bucktails." Angelo was an excellent hunter since he was a boy. He was adept at killing and skinning deer for meat and was the source of most of the white deer tails that hung from the Bucktails' hats. With his rifle over his shoulder and eager to do his civic duty, Angelo marched off to War. His first letters home showed he was prepared to engage the enemy and die for his country but ever hopeful of returning home to his family.

A short time into his service, Angelo witnessed his sergeant place a rifle between his knees, put the muzzle into his mouth and blow his brains out. Shocked, Angelo believed he could never commit the self-destructive act of suicide. He wrote his family, "I won't disgrace my parents by deserting or turning back." Angelo started keeping a list of the names of his friends who had died in battle or of disease since entering the Army. His mood darkened and he wrote to his family "Camp life is not home."

After the brutal Battle of Antietam, Angelo was assigned burial duty. Often when he found just some pieces of bodies, he was told to assemble what looked like a whole body and bury it. Depression and fear set in from his ugly assignment. He wrote, "I know not how soon I will follow my comrades who now lie slumbering in an unknown grave." Dreams of glory began to vanish. The bravado of the eager young soldier had long since disappeared and he stopped calling deserters "cowards."

By the time that Angelo was taken prisoner after the Battle of Fredericksburg, he was described by his friends as "being completely done out." He was sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. Libby had been a tobacco factory, a shipping depot, and a grocery store. Now it stank of dysentery and unwashed bodies. Vermin covered the floors and walls. The inmates were barely fed and considered it great luck to be given six ounces of maggot infested bread twice a day. Desperate to eat, Angelo sold his shoes for \$16 in Confederate script to buy food from the sutlers that preyed on the Union captives. He emerged after five months of imprisonment with severe intestinal troubles. His body was infested with lice. Even when he was finally rid of them, he continued to claw at his skin. Sent home for a short furlough, he seemed mentally unstable. A close family friend said, "He was at times better and then worse" and she felt "rather afraid of him and did not go where he was." Soon she stopped visiting at all. Angelo would have bouts of lucidity, calm down, and then go into a rant. As the weeks passed, slowly he began to quiet down and regain his health. He claimed to feel fit again.

Angelo returned to the War. At Gettysburg, he emerged physically unscathed but fell ill with an unexplained fever and dysentery. His mind began to degenerate. He was admitted to the hospital on October 1, 1863, where it was noted that he was "clear off his hooks" and self-destructive. The authorities wrote to his father to come get him explaining that it was reported by acquaintances that Angelo had become a "totally different person" from the boy he had been when he first entered the Army. He was officially discharged on October 13, 1863.

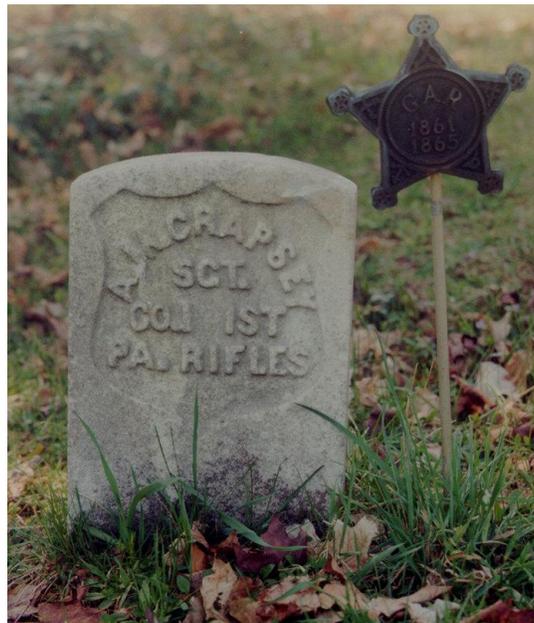
The Army doctors advised the Reverend Crapsey to place Angelo in a lunatic asylum. The Reverend, his second wife, and all Angelo's step-siblings, refused. They insisted that they would take turns and watch him continuously. John Crapsey took his son home.

When his step sister saw Angelo for the first time, she sobbed that he "looked wild." Laura Ann, Angelo's stepmother, said that he was severely malnourished and looked like a "scarecrow... and his mind was weak." A friend claimed, "...he seemed to be

looking for the enemy, seemed to think that his clothes were unclean and was frequently raving and always seemed to be motioning with his hands. He would suddenly leap to his feet, throw up his hands, and shout, 'I surrender'." He insisted that he was "unfit to be seen in decent company."

Angelo had begun to suffer from acute paranoia. He believed that "even the grasshoppers hated him." He had constant facial tics. Tying Angelo to his bed became a shared family ritual when violent fits overtook the 21 year-old veteran. Attacks on his father were routine. Angelo would threaten to kill anyone who approached him. He sobbed into his pillow all through the night, loudly cursing and screaming. He wandered off from the family home, mumbling to himself, constantly ripping at the phantom lice that he felt crawling all over his body. He tried hacking at the lice with a rusty scythe, luckily too old and dull to do more harm than give him bad cuts. He repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempted suicide, leaping through windows, jumping into the river and ingesting poison.

Angelo did have moments of lucidity when he spoke normally, ate dinner with his family, and able to do some chores. But then he'd disappear into his own tortured world again. On August 4, 1864, Angelo's friends refused to allow him to accompany them on a hunt. Angelo retrieved a rifle he had hidden from his family, went into the forest and sat down near the bank of the Allegheny River. He leaned back against a tree, put the muzzle of his rifle into his mouth and pulled the trigger. This time, he was successful.



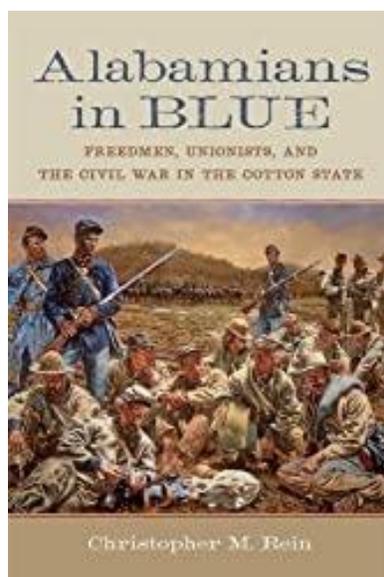
Sergeant Angelo M. Crapsey died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head and was buried in John Lyman Cemetery in Roulette, Pennsylvania. His death was not included in the statistics of men who died during the Civil War.

**Submitted by Judith Breitstein**

# Alabamians in Blue: Freedmen, Unionists, and the Civil War in the Cotton State

By Christopher M. Rein. Review by Michael W. Fitzgerald, St. Olaf College, Baton Rouge: Louisiana Univ. Press, 2019. Pp. xii, 298. ISBN 978-0-8071-7066-3.

*Alabamians in Blue* incorporates battlefield history with the wider scholarly literature on Civil War-era Alabama. Military historian Christopher Rein (US Army Combat Studies Inst.) is well read in the relevant literature and has found an underexplored niche subject: the broader implications of Whites and Blacks fighting together in the Union Army. His work is based on careful research in manuscript repositories across the nation, including the excellent Grenville Dodge collection. He has gone far beyond such exhaustively mined standard sources as the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*.



Rein concentrates on eight Union Black Regiments, one White Cavalry Regiment, and smaller units raised in Alabama or composed of refugees from the State. All together, Alabama contributed 7,500 troops to the Federal Army, enough to help "fatally undermine Confederate efforts" (1) by enhancing Federal control and intelligence and undermining the institution of slavery itself. The book's purview extends to the recruitment of Black and White escapees in Mississippi, Tennessee, and elsewhere, as well as their military service throughout the South. Rein's story mostly unfolds in the Northern part of Alabama, but he also examines the often overlooked Southeastern corner of the State, where refugees fleeing to the Florida coast joined Union regiments in considerable numbers.

Though the author touches on irregular warfare, he focuses on the history of conventional battles and argues "for the continuing relevance and importance of military

operations in warfare (5)." But this is problematic, since the War's big battles and campaigns mostly bypassed Alabama. Hence, the political history of the State within the Confederacy assumes greater relative importance, as should guerrilla conflict. The State long remained understudied because seemingly little of decisive consequence happened there. For that reason, Rein's battlefield study and unique investigation of Black and Southern White Union soldiers are welcome contributions.

Rein sees his topic as anticipating the biracial alliance that transformed the South during the Civil Rights Era. This alliance of African Americans and smaller numbers of native Whites today "holds promise for sparking continued social progress and progressive change in Alabama (4)."

The book is not, of course, an exercise in Lost Cause mythology; instead, it puts forward a counter-narrative that might inspire hopes for a different Alabama now. This presentist tone of his narrative should not be allowed to obscure how meticulous a work of Civil War history Rein has produced. The military story moves along briskly and features discerning and lucid explanations of broad strategic moves. Rein also clears up (in a valuable appendix) the confusion caused by endless redesignations and renumberings of Black units. Almost nothing has been written about Alabama's Black Regiments raised mostly from escaped slaves, so his attention to the dissolution of slavery and its consequences is welcome. The author cautions his readers that the surviving source material "unfortunately skews coverage toward the White troops (4)," even though much larger numbers of Black Alabamians served the Union.

Rein does not altogether elide the occasional racial tensions between Blacks and Whites in the Army, but overall he portrays them as consciously engaged in a common enterprise. He points out that a straw poll showed that 94 percent of the White First Alabama Cavalry backed Lincoln's reelection, which indicates an openness to emancipation at least (175). Rein could have done more to buttress this insight. The evidence shows that the White Alabama Union troops were mostly refugees from overwhelmingly White enclaves in the poorest mountain areas of Northern Alabama, where there was strong opposition to immediate secession. Draft evasion was common and the process of escape further impoverished future volunteers. The animosity toward the Confederacy of these alienated and antagonized refugees undercut established racial views in favor of a complete transformation of Southern society. After the War, many White Union veterans endorsed confiscation proposals and kept voting Union and then Republican well into the Reconstruction Era.

The author relies heavily on Margaret Storey's excellent study of the cooperative interaction between the Tennessee Valley's dissident Unionist masters and their enslaved people. But most of the Alabamian troops he describes were unlike the Alabamians Storey has studied, that is, planter dissenters resentful of the secessionist destruction of slavery. Given the pattern of enlistment from beyond the mountains, the First Alabama's record is more a straightforward tale of lower-class and mountain-region resentments intensified by Secession and War. Their grievances outweighed their previous proslavery views and indeed made them antislavery. That story of the broad

issue of conflicting racial attitudes should have been front and center, and not scattered as the episodes of racial conflict and coexistence that appear throughout the text. This would have better fit the book's insightful discussions of future Reconstruction political figures who fought over civil rights, like the quarreling future Republican Governor William H. Smith and US Senator George Spencer.

Rein makes some unorthodox narrative choices. His book starts a long way back (ca. 10,000 BC!) with human migrations across the Bering Strait. Describing the geography of Alabama makes sense, because it pertains to what occurred during the War. The same cannot be said for the inclusion of a ten-page discussion of the Mound-Builder cultures, Hernando de Soto, and New France before getting to the start of the Nineteenth-Century flood of White settlement (15 - 25). Rein's account of the territorial controversy does not explain its bearing on the themes he will develop later.

This is a problem, because political alignments more germane to Rein's story get short shrift. Although the author is well aware of the longstanding North Alabama Jacksonian Democratic preferences, since future Unionist strongholds shared them, his control of the subject is imperfect (35). For example, he contends that, in 1860, "there ... [was a] strong correlation between a lack of support for Breckinridge ... and the large number of counties that eventually sent large numbers of White soldiers into the Union Army (38)." This unattested claim is mistaken. The Southern Democratic candidate John Breckinridge swept the very mountain regions of North Central Alabama that provided the bulk of White Union soldiers. Slow to realize secession was just weeks away, these men stuck with their traditional partisan Democrat alignment. The broader point is that prevailing Jacksonian preferences determined voting patterns, until the secession vote turned existing partisan behaviors upside down.

In July 2019, Tennessee's Republican Governor, Bill Lee, announced a "Nathan Bedford Forrest Day," to commemorate the military feats of a figurehead of the Ku Klux Klan and Commander of the Confederate troops at Fort Pillow who committed the Civil War's most notorious racial atrocity. Rein points out that the attack on Fort Pillow and surrounding outposts manned by substantially Black Alabama troops did nothing to stop Sherman's campaign against Atlanta (146 - 47). He credits these Union troops, among others, with having "exposed" Forrest's "shortcomings as a military commander (2)." That is, attacking small detachments of Black garrison troops distracted Forrest from more pressing duties in the aftermath of the Atlanta Campaign. Thus, the garrison duty and smaller battles fought by Rein's subjects had real military significance. This is of particular interest at this moment in time. I am not sure Rein makes his case for Forrest's drawbacks as battlefield commander, but he certainly has evidence to point to.

*Alabamians in Blue* is a well researched, reasonable study of a forgotten aspect of the Civil War. It should command the attention of students and scholars of the conflict alike.

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

# 2022 WEST COAST CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

## November 4 - 6, 2022



**WYNDHAM GARDEN HOTEL, 5090 East Clinton Way, FRESNO, CA 93727-1506, (1-559-252-3611 or 1-866-238-4218), \$103.00 per night, or [wydhamguestreservations.com](http://wydhamguestreservations.com), (Fresno Airport).**

**“Grant vs Lee: Combat Strategy & Tactics in 1864 Virginia.”**

**HOSTED BY THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CWRT. For more information, see Website: [SJVCWRT2.com](http://SJVCWRT2.com)**

### **SPEAKERS:**

**Gordon Rhea;  
Eric Wittenburg;  
Chris Mackowski;  
Jim Stanbery.**

**Friday Night Dinner Begins at 5:30 PM.**

**Ron Vaughan, MA.;** (Conference Coordinator: [ronvaughan@prodigy.net](mailto:ronvaughan@prodigy.net)).

**ATTENDEE REGISTRATION: \$200.00 PER PERSON** for Weekend, including meals. Breakfast on your own. Coffee, water, and pastries provided during the Conference. (Non participants who wish Dinner Friday or Saturday nights: \$30.00 each meal.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Member of which CWRT/ORG \_\_\_\_\_

Address Check to **San Joaquin Valley CWRT.**

Send Check and Registration to: **Ron Vaughan (Conference Coordinator), 730 East Tulare Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274-4336.**