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Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
P.O. BOX 254702
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<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



President's Message

NO MESSAGE

James C. Juanitas, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, May 10, 2023
DENNY'S RESTAURANT, 3520 AUBURN BOULEVARD, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 18:

MEMBERS – 17: James C. Juanitas, President; Carol Breiter, Vice President; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Harvey & Marsha Cain-Jutovsky, Arnd Gartner, Ron Grove, Wayne & Nina Henley, Chris Highsmith, Kim Grace Long, Joseph (MAL) & Michelle Matalone, Paul (IPP) & Patty Ruud, Stephen Shiflett, & Peggy Tveden.

GUESTS – 01: Monica Crooks.

1. The meeting was called to order by President James Juanitas at 7:04 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Juanitas.
2. President Juanitas asked those present to submit a Civil War related question with the correct answer so a back-up program can be implemented if the speaker no-shows. Please submit to Bernie Quinn, Program Director, at: bwqcrypto@gmail.com.
3. The Board is looking for a meeting place. The 2023 Civil War Conference is in Fresno in November 3 - 5. New members and guests were introduced.
4. The raffle was conducted by Joe & Michelle Matalone. Books and bottles of wine were offered as prizes. The raffle raised \$46.00.
5. The speaker was James Juanitas and his topic was "Johnny Clem: Drummer Boy of Shiloh." To begin, President Juanitas compared himself to Johnny Clem in that James began his United States Navy career at the age of 17.
6. In May of 1861, 9 year-old John Lincoln "Johnny" Clem ran away from his home in Newark, Ohio, to join the Union Army and was rejected by the 3rd Ohio. Later, Clem tried the 22nd Michigan Regiment and was turned down. Determined, Clem tagged after the 22nd Regiment, acted out the role of a drummer boy, and was allowed to remain. Though still not enrolled, he performed camp duties and received a soldier's pay of \$13 a month, a sum donated by the Regiment's officers.
7. Clem was not at Shiloh with the 22nd Michigan. In 1863, he was at the Battle Of Chickamauga with the 22nd Michigan and rode an artillery caisson to the front and wielded a musket trimmed to his size. In one of the Union retreats, a Confederate officer ran after the cannon Clem rode with, and yelled, "Surrender you damned little Yankee!" Johnny shot him dead. This pluck won for Clem national attention and the name "Drummer Boy of Chickamauga."
8. Clem stayed with the Army through the War, served as a courier, and was wounded twice. Between Shiloh and Chickamauga, he was enrolled in the Army, began receiving his own pay, and was soon-after promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He was only 12 years-old.
9. After the Civil War, he tried to enter West Point, but was turned down because of his lack of education. A personal appeal to President Ulysses S. Grant, his Commanding General at Shiloh, won him a 2nd Lieutenant's appointment in the Regular Army on 18 December 1871, and in 1903 he attained the rank of Colonel and served as Assistant Quartermaster General. He retired from the Army as a Brigadier General in 1915, having served 55 years. In 1916, after retirement, Clem was promoted to Major General.
10. General Clem died in San Antonio, Texas, on 13 May 1937, exactly 3 months shy of his 86th birthday, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.
11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.
12. The next Executive Board Meeting is June 14, 2023 at 10:00 AM, Brookfields at Madison and I-80.

Submitted by George W. Foxworth for Secretary (Vacant)

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance on May 10, 2023 was \$4,626.92. Thanks to Joe & Michelle Matalone, members, & guest, the raffle brought in \$46.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2023

Date	Speaker	Topic
June 14th	"Bernie Quinn"	"George A. Forsyth"
July 12th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
August 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
September 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
October 11th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
November 8th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"

2023 Membership

The 2023 membership renewal is due on January 1, 2023. 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:

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.

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

Irene Rucker Sheridan

Irene Rucker was born on June 4 1856, at Fort Union in the New Mexico Territory. She was one of four children born to Brigadier General Daniel Rucker (1812-1910) and Irene Curtis. Rucker was a career officer, a graduate of West Point, and a Quartermaster General in the United States Army. Irene's mother (1819-1902, m. 1850) was born in Fort Howard, Wisconsin.



Irene spent her growing up years at Army posts on the Western frontier. Eventually, her father was sent to Chicago to serve on the staff of General Philip Sheridan as an Assistant Quartermaster.

General Philip Sheridan (1831-1888) had the reputation of being a “harsh leader.” After his Civil War service, President Andrew Johnson sent him out West where he served in the Cavalry fighting Native Americans. He did not enjoy his time there. He aired his opinion that “The only good Indians I ever saw were dead” and was famously quoted as saying, “If I owned Texas and Hell, I would rent Texas and live in Hell.”

In 1871, Sheridan was serving in Chicago when the “Great Chicago Fire” broke out. John Hay, a close friend of Robert Lincoln, wrote that Robert, a young lawyer, had just enough time to get to his office and salvage a few of his father's letters from his safe before the building burned to the ground. Mary Lincoln, living in Chicago at the time, added fire to her list of fears. Sheridan took charge of holding back the flames and restoring public order. He stopped the looting and started the rebuilding effort. He was looked upon by the citizens of Chicago as their hero. The fire had killed 300 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed over 2,000 acres of land.

Philip Sheridan was attending a wedding in Chicago in 1874 when he met the beautiful, young, and charming Irene Rucker, who was one of the bridesmaids. Sheridan, a “confirmed bachelor,” was five feet five inches tall and known as “Little Phil.” Abraham Lincoln described him as “A brown, chunky little chap, with a long body, short legs, not enough neck to hang him, and such long arms that if his ankles itch, he can scratch them without stooping.”

And yet...everyone who was in the room agreed that it seemed to be love at first sight for the two, neither being bothered by the General being more than twice Miss Rucker's age.

The smitten Sheridan courted Irene assiduously over the next several months. People would gossip about the way he grinned at her and held her hand as they traveled down elegant Wabash Avenue in an open carriage, with “pretty Miss Rucker” looking up at him adoringly.

Sheridan’s marriage proposal was readily accepted by Irene and the wedding was held on June 3, 1875 in the Ruckers’ home. For the traditional Catholic ceremony, the bride wore a sumptuous white gown. A long veil, decorated with orange blossoms, trailed behind her. She was adorned with a “gold necklace with solitaire pendant, diamond solitaire ear rings, and gold bracelets, the gifts of the bridegroom.”

Though the guest list was small, it was full of Civil War notables, including General and Mrs. William Tecumseh Sherman, General and Mrs. Pope, General and Mrs. Crook, General and Mrs. Cook, General Ord, and General Van Vliet. President and Mrs. Grant were unable to attend due to Government business. The couple moved immediately into their home on Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

Not long after their marriage, the Sheridans moved to Washington, DC. Their home was gifted to them by the citizens of Chicago, who gratefully remembered Sheridan as the protector of their City. Irene quickly became one of the most popular hostesses in the area and easily integrated into society there. “Pretty Miss Rucker” was now known to one and all as “the lovely Mrs. Sheridan.” Irene was seemingly able to handle up to 300 guests in her “At Homes” at least once a week.

The Sheridans had four children, Mary born in 1876, twin daughters Irene and Louise born in 1877, and Philip Jr. born in 1880. Amidst the joy of welcoming their children into the world, Irene suffered a devastating loss. On July 11, 1878, her brother, 1st Lieutenant John Anthony Rucker, drowned while unsuccessfully trying to save the life of another soldier as the two tried to cross a river that had swollen during a torrential rainstorm. Camp Supply, where he had been stationed in Arizona, was renamed Fort Rucker in his honor.

Philip Sheridan had lived a hard life during his Army years. He had always been slender but now at 57 years old, he ballooned up to over 200 pounds. In 1888, he had a series of massive heart attacks. The family retired to the summer cottage they had built the year before in Dartmouth, Maine, hoping he might regain his health there.

After Sheridan’s first heart attack, the United States Congress promoted him to General of the Army on June 1, 1888. Sheridan was elated. Sadly, he passed away only two months later on August 5, 1888. Irene was a widow after only 13 years of marriage.

The funeral was held in Saint Matthew’s Catholic Church on the corner of 15th and H Streets NW. Buried with Sheridan was an American flag and his sabre with the names and dates of all the battles he had fought in during his long, military career engraved on the scabbard. Sheridan’s brother, Brigadier General Michael Sheridan, remained at Irene’s side throughout the long day. He had served at his brother’s side for most of the Civil War battles. President and Mrs. Grant, and the President’s Cabinet, were all in attendance.

Philip Sheridan was buried with full military honors at Arlington Cemetery. His internment there made the Cemetery more prominent in the country’s eye and a coveted place to be buried. His memoirs, finished barely two months before he died, were published shortly after his death.

A magnificent bronze equestrian statue of the general was situated in Sheridan Circle, a short distance from the family home in DC. It was near enough that the children could lean out their bedroom windows and whisper, “Good morning, dear Papa,” each morning.



On January 19, 1893, Irene’s younger brother, 32 year-old 1st Lieutenant Francis Dring Rucker, died from an accidental fall from his horse.

Irene never remarried. She was famously quoted as saying, “I would rather be the widow of Phil Sheridan than the wife of any man living.” In 1930, a bill to increase her annual widow’s pension from \$2,500 to \$5,000 was passed unanimously by the Senate.

Irene had been a widow for 50 years. She died at her home in Washington, DC, on February 24, 1938. She was buried in Arlington cemetery next to her husband.



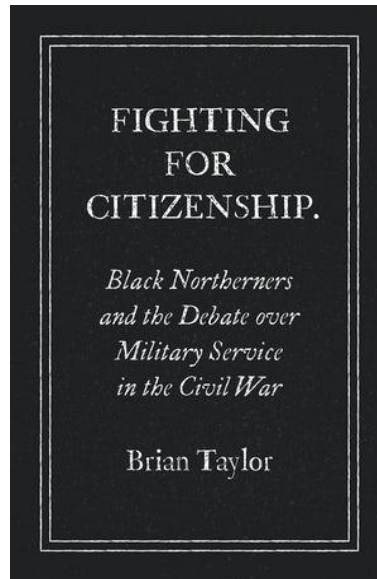
Irene Rucker Sheridan was survived by her three daughters, who much like the daughters of General Robert E. Lee, never married. Her son, Major Philip Sheridan Jr, had suffered from diabetes and, like his father, coronary heart disease. He died of a sudden and fatal heart attack at the age of 37 on February 17, 1918. His son, Philip H. Sheridan III served as a WW II fighter pilot. Philip III had flown 76 combat missions during the War. Apparently suffering from what today we call PTSD, at age 31, he took his own life by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge on March 12, 1948. Though the Coast Guard searched thoroughly, his body was never recovered.

Submitted by Judith Breitstein

Fighting for Citizenship: Black Northerners and the Debate over Military Service in the Civil War

By Brian Taylor. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2020. 248 pp. \$29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4696-5977-0; \$95.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4696-5976-3; \$22.99 (e-book), ISBN 978-1-4696-5978-7.

Reviewed by Judith Giesberg (Villanova University). Published on H-CivWar (March, 2021). Commissioned by Stefanie Greenhill.



In *Fighting for Citizenship: Black Northerners and the Debate over Military Service in the Civil War*, Brian Taylor offers the astonishing statistic that "more than 70 percent of the Black males of military age living in states in which slavery had ended before the Civil War" served in the US Army during the Civil War (p. 94). This enthusiasm for donning the blue uniform tracks with the scholarly consensus about Black military service, that it was considerable and consequential and that it helped lead to an inclusive definition of citizenship. Frederick Douglass famously said, "Once let the Black man get upon his person the brass letters U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on the earth or under the earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship." This book seeks to complicate this story by exploring the skeptics, holdouts, and dissenters in Northern Black communities--men who cautioned against enlisting before the terms of Black service were clear and knotty questions about Black citizenship were answered. This is a worthwhile endeavor and Taylor makes a good case for why we should open our eyes to the diversity of opinion about military service

among African Americans in the North. Although we have focused attention on recruiters, we have overlooked evidence that they faced pressing questions from skeptical Black men in the North. Here Taylor does good work drawing out these challenges and shows how recruiters handled awkward questions and how they at times questioned the legitimacy of the messages they were delivering to free Black men about why they should risk their lives on behalf of a nation that promised them little in return.

But this very promising book has some rough spots. To start, the book's thesis drifts. Taylor's central claim is that Black soldiers forced the United States to recognize Black citizenship, rights, and equality. They achieved this through a "politics of service" that was articulated in the Black press in the form of debates about whether and when Black men should enlist and in recruitment rallies where attendees shouted back at recruiters, and, when enlisted in the United States Colored Troops (USCT), Black soldiers pressed for pay equity among other things. This process of redefining citizenship through Black military service--or the promise/potential thereof--scored two victories early in the War. The first came in the Militia Act of July 1862, when Congress removed the word "White" from the description of military eligibility, and the second in November 1862, when Attorney General Edward Bates issued an opinion that brushed aside Dred Scott to declare American citizenship race blind. So, when Abraham Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation that cleared the way for states to begin recruiting Black troops, his administration clearly signaled their openness to a racially inclusive interpretation of citizenship.

Before Black recruitment began, citizenship was already being redefined, at least for the purposes of filling the Union ranks. (Indeed, in her award-winning study, *Birtheright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* [2018], Martha Jones shows that Black Baltimoreans were contesting their second-class citizenship by the 1780s.) But, for the subjects of Taylor's book, much more was at stake than that. For the first half of 1863, Black Northerners demanded an end to the US Army's discriminatory policies, such as denying Black men promotion and paying them less, and a response to Confederate threats to execute Black prisoners of war. Some men made their enlistment decisions contingent on the answers to these questions. How many did? We will never know, but surely the high enlistment rate that Taylor quotes is proof of his own claim "that by 1863 opponents of immediate military service were in the minority among Black Northerners, although they remained a substantial, vocal minority" (p. 93). Even so, it is a curious claim to make in a book that asserts that these opponents were responsible for changing the definition of American citizenship.

Here is where some of the drift sets in. By 1863, most of the skeptics, holdouts,

and dissenters had enlisted or were busy enlisting others, so Taylor shifts focus to a discussion of how Black men fought on battlefields not only to save the nation but also to "refound" it, that is, to change it from within the ranks of the army, to force the nation to live up to its ideals (p. 97). This suggests that the "politics of service" lasted only as long as Black men were potential soldiers--until 1863--and not actual ones. It is not clear, either, if the distinction between those who embraced immediate enlistment and those who dragged their feet mattered once they were all in the ranks. I also wondered if it mattered if the men who were striking for equal pay were Northern Blacks or the numerically more significant Southern Blacks. Were they not all fighting for a new nation? Then, once the War was won, Black veterans "sought more" than the concessions they had managed to extract in the form of the Bates opinion, and so they took to the papers, organized in convention, and sometimes ran for office to lobby for amendments that guaranteed an expansive, egalitarian American citizenship (p. 131).

There is more drift in the conclusion when Taylor explains that "Civil War-era Black activists forced otherwise unwilling White officials to specifically define Black men and women as American citizens," for women do not figure into the study, which is about how Black men leveraged their potential military service to get concessions from the Federal Government, hopefully lasting ones, like equal pay and equal protection (p. 149). What exactly Taylor means by citizenship is not clear, but here Taylor claims that "it was never Black Northerners' intention, as they debated service, to use it to win citizenship only for veterans and their families; they had meant for service to win lasting gains for all African Americans" (p. 155). It may have been Northern activists' intention to employ the politics of service to extract a new definition of citizenship that was inclusive of women as well as men, but we would need to have had that introduced to us at the beginning. We know a great deal about the potentially tragic consequences to Black families, free and enslaved, when husbands and fathers enlisted. These personal considerations likely accounted for as much delayed enlistment as politics. When Black soldiers refused to accept lower pay than Whites, their families starved. And, in early congressional conversations about what rights Blacks would gain in the Postwar amendments, women entered the picture only as soldiers' wives. Were Taylor's activists able to see Black women as deserving of rights beyond those that accrued through their connection to Black soldiers?

These limitations aside, Taylor's *Fighting for Citizenship* has done important work for scholars of the Civil War North in complicating the picture of Black enlistment, in making space for dissenting voices within Northern Black communities, and by taking readers inside the work of Black recruitment, where things were not as easy as they might seem.

2023 WEST COAST CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

November 3 - 5, 2023



WYNDHAM GARDEN HOTEL, 5090 East Clinton Way, FRESNO, CA 93727-1506, (1-844-208-0446, 1-559-494-4992, or 1-559-252-3611), \$112.00 per night with Group Block ID# 141218, (Fresno Airport).

“160th Anniversary of the Vicksburg Campaign.”

HOSTED BY THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CWRT. For more information, see Website: SJVCWRT2.com

SPEAKERS:

**General Parker Hills;
General U.S. Grant (Dr. Curt Fields);
Jim Stanbery.**

Friday Night Dinner Begins at 5:30 PM.

Ron Vaughan, MA.; (Conference Coordinator: ronvaughan@prodigy.net).

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION: \$225.00 PER PERSON for Weekend, including meals until October 1, 2023. After October 1, \$250.00. Breakfast on your own. Coffee, water, and pastries provided during the Conference.
(Non participants who wish Dinner Friday or Saturday nights: \$35.00 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.**