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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**

By now, most of you have received a letter from me asking for any suggestions or ideas of how to grow our Round Table. Please take a few moments to help. There so much interest in the 1990's after Ken Burns' PBS Documentary and then the movies Gettysburg and Glory. Interest seems to be just slowly ebbing away. Personally, I am still amazed by the whole time period and the people. The escapades of the campaigns and battles and how it all changed the direction of our nation. I hope to see everyone at future meetings!!

**Carol Breiter, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**  
**R Vida Cantina Restaurant, 7040 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights**

**ATTENDANCE – 9**

**MEMBERS – 7:** Carol Breiter, President; Paul Ruud, Vice President; Jean Breiter, Steve Breiter, Ron Grove (PD), Brendan Harris, & Patty Ruud.

**GUESTS – 1:** Katherine Phillips.

**ZOOM – 1:** Michelle Matalone (Member).

1. The meeting was called to order by President Carol Breiter at 7:01 PM and she led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Correction to April 9, 2025 Minutes: Member Andrea Sheffield was present.
3. President Breiter shared this day in history.
4. There was no old or new business.
5. There was no Raffle due to low attendance, and postponed to June 2025 by the Members present.
6. Announcement: Due to changes by Southwest Airlines, the program presenter was due to arrive in San Francisco three hours after our meeting.
7. ZOOM was set up and running by Ron Grove. Many thanks.
8. The program was presented by Steve Breiter at the last minute. He presented an outstanding program on the "Early Life and Times of General Thomas J. Stonewall Jackson." Steve's program discussed why General Jackson was quirky. Thank you Steve.
9. After discussions, the evening ended at 8:00 PM.
10. The next Executive Board Meeting is Wednesday, June 11, 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 May 14th was \$5,212.34. There was no raffle.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2025

Date	Speaker	Topic
June 11th	"Bernie Quinn"	"George Armstrong Custer"
July 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
August 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
September 10th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
October 8th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
November 12th	"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](mailto: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](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**

# **National Register of Women's Service in the Civil War (NRWSCW):**

## **Woman of the Month**

### **Susie King Taylor**



Image dated 1902. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Born August 6, 1848 in Liberty County, Georgia

Died October 6, 1912 in Boston, Massachusetts

Buried at Mount Hope Cemetery in Roslindale, Massachusetts

Susan Ann Baker was born into slavery on August 6, 1848, the first of nine children of Raymond and Hagar Baker. For the first seven years of her life, she lived with her parents on a plantation owned by Valentine Grest on the Isle of Wight. Susie's grandmother, Dolly Reed, convinced Grest to allow Susie and two younger siblings to live with her in Savannah, Georgia. Dolly immediately arranged for the education of her grandchildren. Over the next six years, Susie was secretly educated by a succession of teachers, including a free Black woman, Mrs. Woodhouse; an African-American nun; a White playmate; and the son of their landlord.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Susie was ordered back to the plantation. In early April 1862, she fled with her uncle to a Federal gunboat at Saint Catherine's Island. They were shortly transferred to Saint Simon's Island, where Susie made

herself known to Union authorities. In short order, at the age of thirteen, Susie founded the first free school for African American children in the State of Georgia. She taught more than forty children during the day, and held night classes for adults

In August 1862, the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, later redesignated as the 33rd U.S. Colored Infantry, formed on Saint Simon's. Susie enrolled as a laundress, and went with the Regiment when it was transferred to Beaufort, South Carolina. There, at the age of fourteen, Susie married Edward King of Company E. She and Edward served together in the 33rd USCT until they were mustered out on February 6, 1866. Although officially designated as a laundress, Susie also worked as a cook, seamstress, and nurse for her Regiment. Additionally, she taught the men of the Regiment to read and write. Susie served with the Regiment for four years and three months, but was never paid for her services.

After their military service, Susie and Edward settled in Savannah. Susie opened a day school for African American children, and a night school for their parents. Edward found work as a longshoreman. Sadly, Edward passed away in September 1866, just a few months before Susie gave birth to their only child. When public charter schools for African American children opened in Savannah, Susie's private schools went out of business. No longer able to support herself and her child by teaching, Susie entered domestic service with the family of Charles Green. It was in the employ of the Greens that she first travelled to Boston.

In 1874, Susie permanently relocated from Savannah to Boston, and continued to work as a domestic servant until she married Russell Taylor in 1879. She became a civil rights activist and also helped form Corps 67 of the Women's Relief Corps, serving as its President in 1893. Russell died in 1901. In 1902, Susie published her memoir, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33rd United States Colored Troops, Late 1st S.C. Volunteers*. Susie is the only African American woman to publish a Civil War memoir. She passed away ten years later, at the age of 64, and was buried in an unmarked grave next to Russell.

In 2008, Susie was the recipient of the Georgia Women of Achievement Award. In 2019 the Georgia Historical Society erected a marker honoring her near the First Presbyterian Church in Midway. In 2020, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department marked her grave with an upright granite marker. A public school in Savannah is named after Susie. Her memoir is still in print.

**Submitted by the "Society for Women and the Civil War - [www.swcw.org](http://www.swcw.org)"**



# Nathan Bedford Forrest is Dead

Gary Carlyle, May 31, 2024, [blueandgrayeducation.org](http://blueandgrayeducation.org)



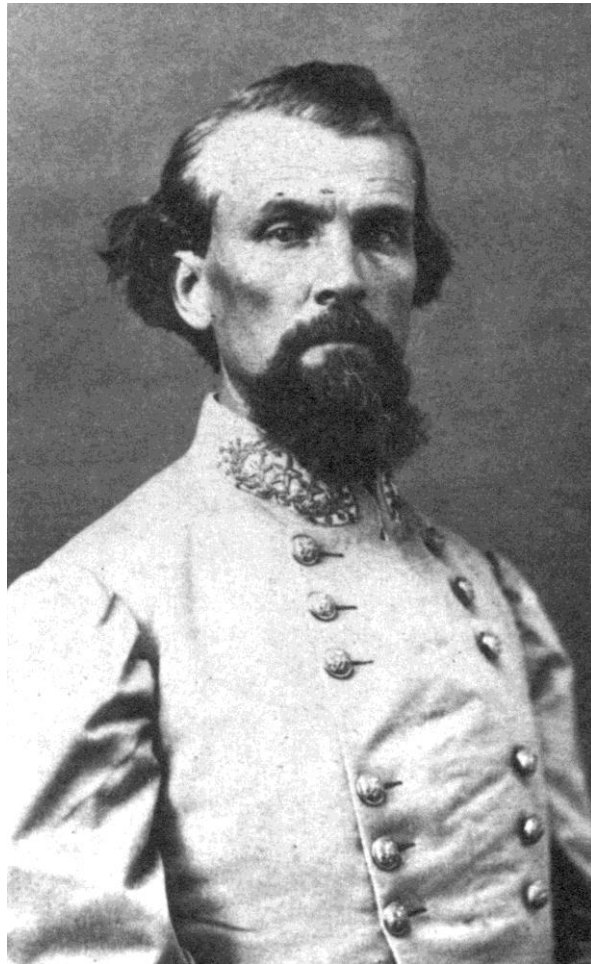
Forrest's 1877 casket, currently on display at the [National Confederate Museum](http://NationalConfederateMuseum.org) in Columbia, Tennessee | photo courtesy of author

In Memphis, Tennessee, on October 29, 1877, at 7:30 in the evening, the former Confederate cavalry general remarked, "Call my wife," and closed his eyes forever.

Gen Nathan Bedford Forrest's last notable public appearance had been on July 4th of 1877. The *Memphis Daily Avalanche* was present for the event and wrote, "[He] was invited to speak by the Jubilee of Pole Bearers, a political and social organization comprised of Black Southerners." In his address to the group, the *Avalanche* reported that he told them, "We have one Union, one flag, one country; therefore, let us stand together."

On the day of his death, former Confederate States of America President Jefferson Davis visited the unwell Forrest. According to noted Memphis historian Lee Millar, "President Davis had come by at 2 p.m. ... It was reported that General Forrest did rouse up to speak to his former Commander and they concluded their visit by expressing their final goodbyes."

The General had requested that he be buried in his Confederate uniform, and the funeral was held on Halloween at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The *Memphis Appeal* reported, "At the church were assembled thousands of persons both Black and White. The sidewalks and even the streets for several blocks were thronged and jammed with people." A correspondent from the *Cincinnati Commercial* was in attendance and reported, "I watched the passing of Forrest's funeral and the long procession afforded an impressive if not an imposing spectacle ... several hotels and warehouses were draped in mourning and the business of the City was almost suspended during the passing of the funeral."



According to Millar, "The procession from Cumberland Presbyterian Church to Elmwood Cemetery was the largest ever in Memphis, even larger than that for Elvis." The procession included dignitaries, clergy, and former soldiers, and the hearse was drawn by four black horses with Jefferson Davis and Tennessee Governor John Porter in a carriage behind Forrest. Afterward, in a letter, Governor Porter stated, "As we were driving to the Cemetery, Mr. Davis spoke in the highest terms of Forrest's ability as a soldier."

The casket into which Forrest was laid was reported by newspapers to be solid copper with walnut handles and silver attachments and silver angels on various sides and the top. As would be discovered later, the casket was, according to Lee Millar, "merely 'copper-covered' and was in fact solid iron and very heavy."

General Forrest and his wife were reinterred in 1904 to a city park designed to accommodate a monument to him. In 2021, they were moved once again, this time to the National Confederate Museum in Columbia, Tennessee.

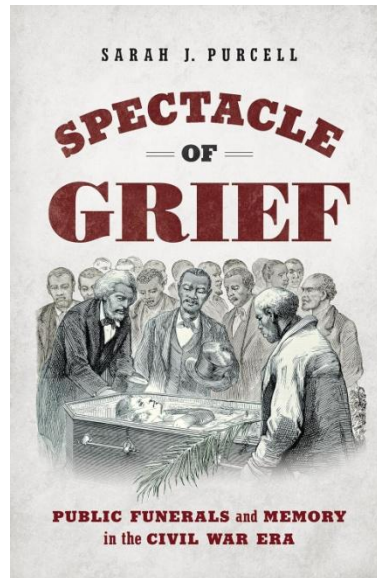
That Cincinnati reporter concluded his story on Forrest's funeral with the following, "The same night they buried him, there came a storm. From the same room where I had watched the funeral, I saw the Northern mists crossing the Mississippi into Arkansas, like an invading army; then came gray rain, and at last a fierce wind, making wild charges through it all. Somehow or other, the queer fancy came to me that the dead Confederate cavalymen, rejoined by their desperate leader, were fighting ghostly battles with the men who died for the Union."

**Submitted by the Blue and Gray Education Association**

# Spectacle of Grief: Public Funerals and Memory in the Civil War Era

By Sarah J. Purcell. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2022. xiv + 338 pp. \$95.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4696-6832-1; \$34.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-4696-6833-8.

Reviewed by Shannon Bontrager (Chattahoochee High School). Published on H-CivWar (December, 2023). Commissioned by Niels Eichhorn.



Private grief could become a public spectacle in moments when funerals and commemorations of certain people go viral. Sarah J. Purcell, the L. F. Parker Professor of History at Grinnell College, suggests that the Nineteenth-Century process of going viral was no accident, and she makes the case that studying public burials and memorials as a "spectacle of grief" is an important way to understand the cultural and political milieu of the American past. This is not a new approach as Katherine Verdery makes a similar case for postsocialist nations in *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*, published in 1999. While Verdery's study focuses on reburial, Purcell focuses her attention on the burial of famous and infamous Civil War personalities, ranging from Elmer Ellsworth to Robert Lee and from Frederick Douglass to Winnie Davis. Purcell argues that the commemorations of what must be described as so-called great men and women showcase an American identity rooted in both national and Confederate ideals. American identity, the author argues, is a hybridization of the Confederate nationalism that morphed into the Lost Cause ideology and the US national identity that underpinned a victorious Union. She contends that this fusion began not in Postbellum Reconstruction but in the earliest days of the conflict when the foundations of reconciliation and reunion were being laid even as destructive conflict consumed the nation. Public funerals of notable figures, in other words, helped Northerners and Southerners begin the process of forgetting the emancipatory cause of the War even before they could cultivate a memory of it. Although limited in some ways, Purcell's exhaustive research and storytelling ability make this book an important contribution to the study of memory and the American Civil War.

*Spectacle of Grief* begins with a telling of Henry Clay's funeral in 1852. Clay died in Washington,



DC, and was the first person to lay in state in the US Capitol before being transported back to Kentucky via train, via riverboat, and overland. People came out in droves to commemorate "The Great Compromiser" along the way. But his death signaled the end of compromise and even the national grief over his death could not create a collective memory strong enough to withstand the rabid sectionalism infecting the minds of many Americans.

The Second Chapter initiates a series of comparative studies, in this case, between the wartime deaths of Elmer Ellsworth and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, while Chapter 3 compares the Postwar commemorative rituals surrounding George Peabody and Robert Lee. The author argues that Americans commemorated Ellsworth's death (at the beginning of the War) and Jackson's (in the middle) in ways that already anticipated interlocking National and Confederate identities into a memory of reunion. Ellsworth, one of Abraham Lincoln's former law students and important presidential campaigner, died at the hands of James W. Jackson, the innkeeper at the Marshall House hotel in Alexandria, Virginia. Jackson shot and killed Ellsworth when the US soldier seized the Confederate flag affixed atop the Marshall House. Commemorations surrounding Ellsworth's body as it was transported to upstate New York incited an early form of US nationalism that described Ellsworth as an early martyr for the American cause. Strangely, Purcell describes Stonewall Jackson's death as a martyrdom comparable to Ellsworth's even though the Confederate General died from pneumonia after being shot by his own men. Her analysis of Jackson's traveling funeral as it made its way to Lexington, Virginia, describes mourners as inventing a similar kind of nationalism that Northerners created in response to Ellsworth's death but inverted it into a kind of Confederate nationalism. This, she argues, was a precursor to the Lost Cause mythology. The analogy that "Ellsworth's and Jackson's twinned martyrdoms set the precedent for one of the strongest strains of Civil War memory" sometimes seems forced and even disjointed (p. 64). This is perhaps one of Purcell's most controversial claims as, for example, Lincoln (whose death is not examined) had not yet delivered his Gettysburg Address at the time of Jackson's death. The author suggests that commemorations for Jackson developed early themes of the Lost Cause myth even though Confederate forces were largely winning the War at the time and the War's outcome was far from realized. She next examines Peabody, who made much of his wealth in Britain and retained a friendship with Lee. The remembrances of both Peabody and Lee suggested that reunification had become solidified in American memory as early as 1869-70 even as contradictions continued between Northerners and Southerners as they eulogized these men. Peabody's death in England, and his subsequent transatlantic voyage back to Massachusetts coupled with Lee's burial in Lexington, Virginia, at Washington and Lee University, demonstrated that the "Lost Cause and the Union Cause both formed a part of public discourse" (p. 139).

Chapter 4 deals with forgetting and does so in a peculiar fashion by comparing Republican Senator Charles Sumner and Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston. Purcell argues that both men were remembered against their will, as champions of reunion. Sumner's abolitionist credentials, the author contends, were weakened if not forgotten by mourners who claimed that his 1872 bill restricting regimental flags was an affront to the US military. Johnston attempted to recuperate what many viewed as a questionable military record by expressing his military bona fides even as he cooperated with US officials after the War. Many viewed, for example, his service as a pallbearer for Ulysses S. Grant as an important moment in the development of reunion sentiments. Such commemorative gestures accentuated the memory of reunion and did little to recuperate his military reputation.

The last chapter compares Frederick Douglass and Winnie Davis, the Postwar socialite and

daughter of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Douglass's memorial, the author asserts, could be used by Northerners and Southerners as a "symbol of Black achievement and a symbol of White achievement." When Americans remembered Douglass, they "seemed to be fighting for their own version of the United States and its racial order" (p. 204). Davis's commemoration, meanwhile, symbolized the Postwar memory of a fully matured Lost Cause and successful reconciliation. Her memorialization, suggests Purcell, demonstrated that "some forms of U.S. National identity were reconstituted out of strands of Union and Confederate memory" (p. 219).

Purcell's research for this book is impressive. She consulted nearly three hundred periodicals that make up three-and-a-half double column pages in her bibliography. She also created her own maps, with the help of Grinnell student Emily Hackman, charting the routes that these traveling funerals took. Despite these accomplishments, there remains a historiographical void concerning the history of memory. Purcell, like many other recent US historians of memory, dutifully cites David Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2002) and Pierre Nora's multivolume work, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (1996). But memory studies have advanced considerably over the past twenty years since these important works were first published. Jan Assmann's *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (2011) and Aleida Assmann's *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, and Archives* (2011) on cultural memory, Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009), and Marianne Hirsch's *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (2012) on post-memory could add valuable interdisciplinary (and periodization) insights to how Americans shaped their memories of the Civil War around the spectacles that notable Nineteenth-Century funerals created.

Purcell's work does bring up interesting questions for others to explore, especially surrounding the choices the author made of people to include who tended to be figures of consensus rather than figures of contestation. Not only does Lincoln's funeral entourage not appear, but other notable figures are also missing, such as John Brown, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Lucretia Mott. Their funerals were perhaps attended by smaller numbers, but the media presence surrounding their deaths was just as significant a spectacle as many others that the author details. Funeral trains, such as the one Brown's body took, threaten to destabilize Purcell's thesis and add more contingency as Brown's memory suggests that another strand of national identity existed even before the Civil War, and continued after it, that was radical and abolitionist. Certainly these strands of memory made it into national identity too even if as a counter-memory. Some US historians will be disappointed that no one from the Trans-Mississippi West or the Pacific Coast Region was included. Historians who embrace the transnational turn, such as myself, would argue that reunionism and the Lost Cause mythology accompanying reconciliation had significant roots in the imperialistic behavior associated with American expansion during and after the Civil War. *Spectacle of Grief*, regrettably, makes no significant effort to decolonize American memory and its imperialistic connections to the Lost Cause falsehood. Finally, some may ask different questions about whether "great men" as spectacle shape national identity or if the intimate funerals of more common people, such as slaves, immigrants, Native Americans, or even soldiers, affect the hearthstones of American families across the nation more meaningfully.

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