



Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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President's Message:

Many thanks to Jim Lane for sharing with us his kinescope film of Jim Bishop's novel "The Day Lincoln was Shot," initially aired on television in February, 1956. This was indeed a unique experience to recall the black and white studio produced drama of half a century ago. The cast, headed by Raymond Massey, Lilian Gish and Jack Lemon, was superb and the historic detail quite accurate. It was especially kind of Jim to step in on short notice when member Ron Perisho was forced to cancel due to his father's serious illness. Thanks again Jim, and we'll look forward to your future talk on the Sultana tragedy. I am told our members enjoyed the production immensely.

The November West Coast Conference plans continue to move forward thanks to the efforts of our committee. We have received several donations for the fund raising raffle and have already registered approximately forty. I am happy to report that many are our members and encourage all of us to consider attending this three day affair. Please see the details on the website; sacramentocwrt.com. This month's issue will highlight guest speaker Brian Steel Wills who has previously honored us with visits and he is easily one of the most informative and entertaining speakers I have ever encountered.

In August we have an opportunity to meet Harold Knudsen, Lt.Col, USA, who is the author of "General James Longstreet, the Confederacy's Most Modern General". He has recently offered to speak to our round table while he is at Travis AFB several days in late August. We are unable to arrange a meeting here on short notice but Col. Knudsen has offered to meet with interested members August twenty-fifth and discuss the Civil War. No specific arrangements have been made, but if there is interest among our members to car-pool, a visit to the Travis area can be arranged. Those interested may contact me at 485-1246 or Silver Williams at 408-4574.

At the board meeting we have agreed to establish a speaker's bureau and post it on the website. Since several of our members give talks at various round tables, a list is being compiled which includes the presentations offered. If interested in being on that list, please contact me or any board member.

On August 10th, we welcome back Jim Stanbery as our speaker. He is a long-time member of the west coast Civil War community and will also be here in November. Jim is noted for his dynamic presentations and ability to clarify issues. He is a professor at Harbor College in LA and a good friend. Please join us at 7 pm at Sam's Hof Brau for "Union Amphibious Operations of the Civil War". Come early for dinner and social hour. See you there.

Don Hayden, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday June 8,
Hof Brau Restaurant, 2500 Watt Ave, Sacramento

ATTENDANCE - 36

MEMBERS – 32

Donald Hayden, President	Scottie Hayden
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Laurel Hayden
Steve Andrews	Nancy Hayden
Roy Bishop	Nina Henley
Ardith Cnota	Wayne Henley
Mitch Cnota	Lowell Lardie
James Cress	Jim Middleton
Jerry Cress	Bob Moore
Alan Geiken	Anne Peasley
John Greer	Rick Peasley
Robert Hanley, MAL	Jim Rathlesberger

GUESTS – 4

Carolyn Ewing
Jim Lane
Jason McCall
John McCroy

Paul Ruud, IPP
Nancy Samuelson
Robert Schroeder
Nicholas Scivoletto
Richard Sickert, MAL
Brent ten Pas
Robert Williams
Susan Williams
Maxine Wollen
John Zasso

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM. by President Don Hayden with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. President Don Hayden welcomed members and guests.
3. President Hayden introduced the speaker, Jim Lane. Jim showed us a movie, “The Day Lincoln was Shot.” It was a play telecast on CBS television in 1956 starring Raymond Massey as Abraham Lincoln, Lillian Gish as Mary Todd-Lincoln, Jack Lemmon as John Wilkes Booth, and others. The narrator was Charles Laughton. It was an excellent movie (kinescope) with an intermission and lively questions at the end. Thank you Jim.
4. John Zasso sold additional raffle tickets and read the numbers.
5. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

George W. Foxworth, Acting for Secretary Edie Keister

Treasurer’s Report

The cash balance following the July 13, 2011 meeting was \$2,616.11. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$73.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

NOTICE OF LOST ARTICLE

Sacramento CWRT member John Greer lost a white Irish sweater at the Gibson Ranch Re-Enactment in May 2011. If anyone knows anything about this, please contact Mr. Greer at 916-739-1892. Thank you.

2011 West Coast Civil War Conference

1861: The First Year

November 11 - 13, 2011, Doubletree Hotel,
Sacramento

Speaker Profile: Dr. Brian Steel Wills

(This is the third installment of biographical profiles of speakers confirmed for the 2011 West Coast Civil War Conference)



Professor Wills is a native of Suffolk, Virginia. He graduated with honors from the University of Richmond with a B.A. in History, and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from The University of Georgia. For years he taught at the University of Virginia's College at Wise. Presently he is the Director of the Study of the Civil War Era and Professor of History at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia.

Dr. Wills has written the definitive biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest titled **A Battle From the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest** which was a Book of the Month and History Book Club selection. He also authored **The War Hits Home, Gone With the Glory**, (a review of Civil War Films), and most recently has assisted in James I.

Robertson's revision of **Civil War Sites in Virginia** and is now co-author. He has also authored a history of the college at Wise and another book on Forrest titled **The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman**. In addition he has multiple other publications including a chapter in the 1862 volume of the series on the war years in Virginia by "Jack" Davis and "Bud" Robertson.

He has received multiple teaching awards including in 2000 the Outstanding Faculty Award from the State of Virginia, the Kenneth Asbury Professor of History winner, and both the Teaching and Research and Publications Awards from UVA, Wise. He is a regular speaker all over the East Coast at round tables, historical societies, and Civic groups.

Those of us who have had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know Brian find him to be more than a knowledgeable historian. He is a warm and genuinely friendly person who has the ability and wit to enlighten as well as entertain. Not to grasp this chance to meet him and our other fine speakers while they are here with us in Sacramento is to miss a golden opportunity.

Don Hayden



DID YOU KNOW?

"Shinplaster" is a term dating back to the American Revolution, and perhaps beyond. History has it that a soldiers' pay was of so little value that they used it to put in their boots to protect their shins. Because of its devaluation as a result of wartime inflation and the prevalence of counterfeiting, the term later was used to describe Confederate money.

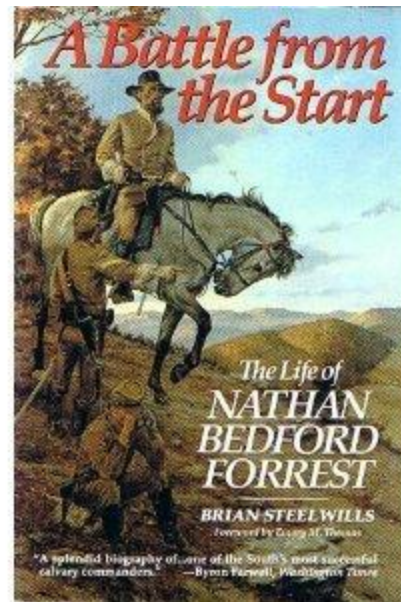


BOOK REVIEW

Wills, Brian Steel. *A Battle from the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Nathan Bedford Forrest has been one of the few figures of antebellum Southern history who has defied the tendency of writers to describe the region in terms of gentility, aristocracy, and anti-commercialism. A commoner who battled his way from poverty to wealth, Forrest's story is one of ambition, struggle, and success. Born into yeoman poverty in Tennessee in 1821, he left his family at age twenty-one to seek his fortune in some occupation other than farming. He migrated to Mississippi for a time, then gravitated to Memphis, where he became a successful slave-trader and cotton-planter. Although opposed to disunion, he joined the Confederate ranks soon after the Tennessee legislature voted in favor of secession. Advancing quickly in rank until he commanded a cavalry unit, Forrest earned a reputation for daring, speed, combativeness, and deception. He taunted Union generals such as William S. Rosecrans, William T. Sherman, U. S. Grant, and Samuel D. Sturgis, among others, in the Western theater. The war eventually exhausted Forrest, as it did the entire South, and he saw no reason to pursue it after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. In the postwar years, Forrest tried to mend his fortune by engaging in cotton production and railroad boosterism. Historians have been more interested in his attempts to defeat congressional Reconstruction by leading for a time the Ku Klux Klan. Forrest lived to see the South "redeemed" from Congressional Reconstruction but not long enough to repair his personal finances. He died in 1877.

Brian Wills has written an engaging and intriguing biography of this perplexing Southerner. Those who hope to glean more information about the battles of



the Civil War will have new material to feast on here, for approximately sixty percent of the narrative deals with Forrest's Civil War career. Wills stresses the swift movement Forrest was capable of, his willingness to use harassment tactics to make the enemy believe that his army was larger than it was, and his belief in aggressive action. Wills ably demonstrates Forrest's independence and his willingness to war by rules other than those laid down by Jomini, but the author also reveals that Forrest was capable of cooperation with other commanders and was not a promoter of guerrilla warfare.

Two explicit themes, however, run through this book. The first is personal violence: Forrest exemplifies the Southern devotion to primitive concepts of honor and physical violence. Indeed, the book is often a running commentary on the fights that composed, seemingly, the bulk of Forrest's life. Even during the Civil War, Forrest forgot to maintain the deportment his rank of general required of him; when his honor was questioned or when someone had perpetrated an injustice upon him, he responded like an enraged subsistence farmer seeking personal satisfaction. As death approached, Forrest recognized the violent quality of his life and gave Wills the title of the book: "My life has been a battle from the start" (p. 377).

The second theme that Wills pursues is the unshakable and unquestioned belief of white

Southerners in white supremacy. Wills finds no romance here, no noblesse oblige, no institution of property softened by the process of human relationships. Forrest, whom Wills uses to characterize nonslaveholder attitudes toward slavery, was always financially ambitious; slaveholding, slave-dealing, or cotton planting were just different forms of acquiring money. Forrest never gave an indication that he believed Africans were anything other than property. During the war, he was confronted with the race issue when the Union enlisted black troops. He had no use for blacks in any capacity other than as cheap laborers; like most other Confederate soldiers, he was outraged at the enlistment of blacks into the Union army. That rage led to the massacre at Fort Pillow (1864), an event which has permanently tarnished Forrest's military reputation. Wills argues that Forrest did not order the massacre or have any real part in it. But hatred of the idea of armed blacks ran so deep in white Southern soldiers that orders to exterminate black troops when found were not necessary.

Forrest's antebellum racism also controlled his postbellum activities. Forrest saw the role of blacks in the postbellum South as that of menial laborers - certainly not as voting citizens or independent farmers. Wills argues that Forrest looked upon the Ku Klux Klan as a means of restoring law and order to a disordered society (although he regretted some of its excesses). Forrest did, in fact, provide the Klan with some direction and leadership. Wills shows that Forrest only provided partial truths about his activity in testimony before congressional investigators.

This is a well-researched and nicely crafted work. The interpretations are judiciously reached and persuasively argued - although one feels that perhaps Wills has overly exaggerated the role of Southern honor and the culture of Southern subsistence farmers. Scholars and the general reading public will learn much and find much to admire in this important biography.

James L. Huston. *The Mississippi Quarterly*, Winter, 1993.

Article can be found here;

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3524/is_n1_v47/ai_n28633564/



UPCOMING SCWRT SPEAKER SCHEDULE

- Aug. 10** Jim Stanberry; "Union Amphibious Operations During the Civil War."
- Sep. 14** Don Stoker; "Grand Strategy During the Civil War."
- Oct. 12** Nancy Samuelson; "Sanitary Commission."
- Nov.** No meeting due to Annual Conference to be held in Sacramento on November 11-13.
- Dec. 14** Paul Ruud; "What Did They Do After the Civil War."



AUGUST DURING THE CIVIL WAR

1861

- 6th** President Lincoln signs a law freeing slaves being used by the Confederates in their war effort.
- 10th** Battle of Wilson's Creek
- 12th** President Lincoln issues a Proclamation of a National Day of Fasting
- 28th** Fort Hatteras falls

1862

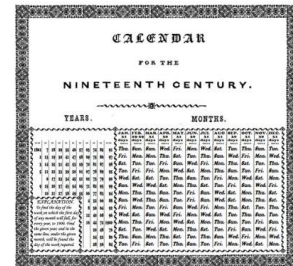
- 9th** Battle of Cedar Mountain
- 29th & 30th** Second Battle of Bull Run. The Union suffers another defeat and President Lincoln relieves Union Commander, General John Pope.

1863

- 10th** President Lincoln meets with abolitionist Frederick Douglas who pushes for full equality for Union 'Negro troops.'
- 21st** At Lawrence, Kansas, pro-Confederate William C. Quantrill and 450 pro-slavery followers raid the town and butcher 182 boys and men.

1864

- 29th** Democrats nominate George B. McClellan for president to run against Republican incumbent President Lincoln.



Civil War Blog Spotlight

Mysteries and Conundrums

National Park Service staff Eric Mink, Noel G. Harrison, and chief historian John Hennessy post material "about a new photograph, a new source, or a new idea about the historic landscape on and around the four Civil War battlefields within the park - Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House" has led to "new understandings or insights." The blog is "an open invitation" for the general public to participate in those conversations.

You can find Mysteries and Conundrums at <http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/>

