



**Volume 60, No. 8
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Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
P.O. BOX 254702
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President's Message

I hope you all had a chance to watch the six-hour History Channel series on Ulysses S. Grant. It was outstanding. So many books have been written about him that it is impossible to include them all. One book I highly recommend is "Campaigning with Grant" by Horace Porter. It really shows Grant the man.

The night Grant got to Chattanooga, he called for meetings with all of Rosecrans's staff officers. He was very impressed with the Logistics Office of Captain Horace Porter. They soon became great personal friends.

Two things Porter wrote about Grant really stuck with me. First, he said Grant was able to lead when others were no longer able to advise. To me, this is Grant at Shiloh. In total shock and confusion, one man steps forward and says, "You do this and you do that." Slowly things stabilize. That night General William T. Sherman asks if it's time to start crossing the River to retreat. Instead Grant says, "We'll lick them tomorrow." That is exactly what happened.

At the end of his first Battle, Belmont in Missouri, Grant realized-that the other side was just as scared as he and his men were. This gave him a new confidence that both sides were dealing with fear. It was not unique to one side.

Dennis Kohlmann, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, July 8, 2020
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 0:

MEMBERS – 0: No meeting and no Members.

GUESTS – 0: No meeting and no Guests.

1. No meeting. Meetings are cancelled for the remainder of 2020. The next meeting in 2021 is unknown at this time.
2. The next Board Meeting is unknown at this time.

George W. Foxworth for Vacant, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance on July 8th was \$5,038.89. No meeting and no raffle.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2020 & 2021

Date	Speaker	Topic
August 12th	"No Meeting"	"No Topic, No Meeting"
September 9th	"No Meeting"	"No Topic, No Meeting "
October 14th	"No Meeting"	"No Topic, No Meeting "
November 11th	"No Meeting"	"No Topic, No Meeting "
December 9th	"No Meeting"	"No Topic, No Meeting"
January 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"

2020 Membership

The 2020 membership renewal was due as of January 1, 2020. 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

NOTE: 2020 memberships are good for 2021 due to COVID-19.

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:

qwfoxworth@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.

NORTH & SOUTH IS BACK!

Re-Launched in July 2019, three issues have already appeared by December 31, 2019. Each 100-page issue is packed with 7 - 8 articles plus the familiar Departments--Knapsack, Crossfire, and Briefings-- and a new one, *Civil Warriors*, that looks at little known participants in the War.

Lead article in Issue 4 is a detailed examination of whether Meade could have - and should have - trapped and destroyed the Army of Northern Virginia. (Editor says yes, 98%.) There will be a follow-up discussion article.

To subscribe go to northandsouthmag.com or call Keith on (559) 260 3852 (Pacific time).

Sacramento Civil War Round Table

Board of Directors



A Board of Directors' Meeting was held at the Ruud Ranch near Auburn, California, on Thursday, July 16, 2020. The purpose of the Meeting was to discuss and decide on the Round Table's activities for the remainder of 2020 due to COVID-19.

The first item was the monthly meetings. Since the Hof Brau is closed to inside dining and meetings, all remaining 2020 monthly meetings are cancelled. The Board will meet again late in 2020 to make plans for 2021. Our meeting is not dependent on COVID-19 but our decisions will depend on COVID-19 and the Hof Brau.

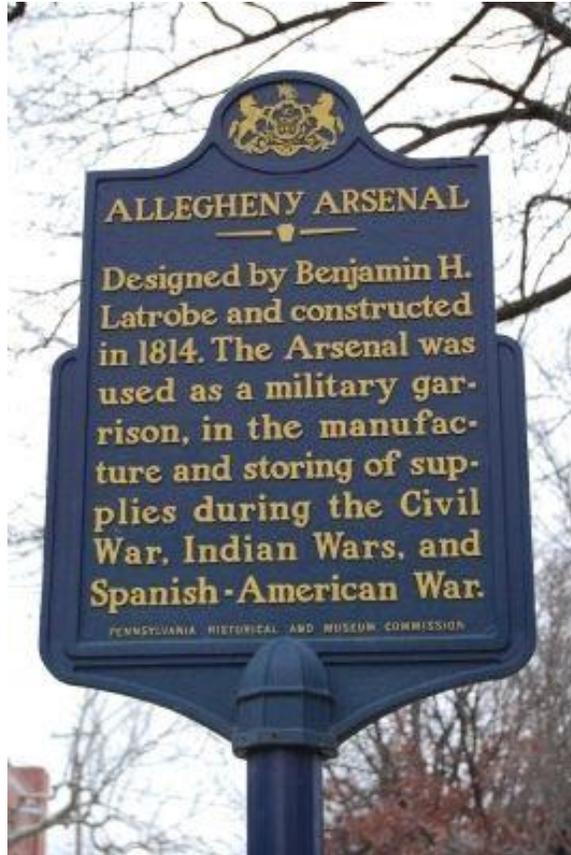
The second item was 2020 membership dues. All 2020 members in good standing will not be required to renew in 2021. Your 2020 membership covers your 2021 membership dues.

The final item was the Battle Cry. We will continue to publish the newsletter each month.

If you have any questions, please contact any Board Member.

The Allegheny Arsenal Explosion

During the Civil War, the United States Army Allegheny Arsenal in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania, produced 128,000 cartridges a day. It stood on a military complex of over 30 acres on the east bank of the Allegheny River in a mixed working class neighborhood. The ammunition laboratory was near the center of the complex. One hundred and eighty six civilians worked in the one story building. Most were Irish immigrants who worked 12 hours a day, six days a week. Young boys had been employed there but they were constantly being caught carrying matches, smoking on the highly flammable property and sometimes stealing and selling cartridges. Boys were being phased out and the more nimble fingered women and girls, some as young as 12, were replacing them.



On the assembly line, cartridges were filled with bullets, minie balls, and gunpowder. The youngest workers earned 50 cents a day. (Union privates received 43 cents a day with payment often delayed for months.) More experienced workers received \$1.10 for producing about 800 rolled cartridges daily.

Mothers often worked beside their children, grateful for any extra income that they could bring in. Fathers and sons had gone off to war so the added income was desperately needed. Parents joined with factory owners to rail against any proposed law that would stop child labor.

September 17, 1862 was payday. Workers went to the main office to pick up their wages and then returned to the factory. The temperature hovered in the 90 degree range. Around two PM, Joseph R. Frick was delivering a wagon loaded with 10 barrels of DuPont and Company gunpowder to the main laboratory. He complained to co-workers that carting between two to 3,000 pounds of gunpowder a day would likely be the death of him. It is believed that a spark was produced by his

horse's iron shoe or his wagon's metal wheels striking the cobblestone street. The fiery particle lit up the stray gunpowder that clung to the stone streets and walls. Boom! Frick was thrown from his seat and one of his two horses was severely burned. Sheets of flame carpeted the courtyard.

Three explosions were heard and then the Arsenal exploded. Windows and doors of nearby buildings were blown out. The explosions were heard two miles away.

Colonel John Symington, Commander of the Arsenal, ran from his office to the laboratory. A bucket brigade was started but it was useless against the inferno. Alexander McBride, the Superintendent of Operations, sent a desperate message to the Volunteer Pittsburgh Fire Department.

Room #6 exploded as the roof of the laboratory collapsed and fell in. Workers, their hair and clothes in flames, tried to escape through windows or doors, tearing at their burning flesh. School aged children were trampled underfoot while trying to get to safety, the skin of their faces hanging in shreds. A girl's body was found intact and unburned. She had died from a broken neck after being pushed through a window. Five girls, alive but badly burned, were taken to nearby homes. Four died.

The Fire Department eventually brought the flames under control, leaving heaps of smoldering rubble with bits of bones and metal hair pins gleaming from the ashes. Pieces of flesh hung from trees. Stray limbs were found hundreds of yards from the explosion. Shards of skulls mingled with dinner baskets, torn clothing and gaily colored hair ribbons. "Curiosity hunters carried away human remains from the blast as souvenirs."

Seventy women and girls were killed along with eight men and boys. Fifty four of the bodies were unidentifiable. Philip McKenny was recognized because of his false teeth. The body of George Clouse, Superintendent of the Cylinder Department, was found. The charred corpse he held in his arms was assumed to be his daughter. The still smoldering body of Joseph Bollman was found near the burnt remains of his daughter, Mary Abigail. The face of fifteen year old Catherine Burkhart, the mainstay of her widowed mother, was badly charred but distinguishable. Ten year old Katie Dillon was recognizable but not the corpses of several sets of sisters: Ellen and Mary Slattery, Eliza and Harriet Lindsay, Agnes and Mary Davison among others. Alexander McBride was able to save himself by climbing through a window but his 15 year-old daughter, Katie, was buried alive under the collapsed roof of Room #6. Even so, McBride continued to help the wounded.

The Allegheny Cemetery donated a parcel of land for the burials. The following day, 39 black government issued coffins, filled with bodies and body parts, singed bones and fresh flowers, were lowered into a mass grave. Fifteen identified girls were interred at Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery.

The Allegheny Arsenal Explosion was the deadliest civilian industrial accident during the Civil War.

Alexander McBride had once been a cooper. He insisted that the lids of the DuPont barrels once pried open, could not be sealed properly again. DuPont ignored him. McBride ordered sawdust and ashes to be laid over the stone streets. Colonel Symington had the "debris" swept away. McBride begged Symington to give the workers a half day off on Saturday so the walls and streets could be scrubbed free of loose gunpowder. His request was refused.

The day after the explosion work resumed in the buildings that were undamaged by the blast. The smell of burnt flesh still wafted through the town.

A month before the disaster, the U.S. Military Retirement Board had denied Colonel John Symington's request to submit his retirement papers. Now, a month later, a coroner's inquest was assembled. Symington was disliked in the community. He was suspected of being a Confederate sympathizer. His wife was related to George Pickett and Symington had recommended Pickett be sent to West Point. His own son was serving in the Confederate Army and his daughter had married a Confederate General. Symington was accused of negligence and sloppy procedures but the jury was split. Symington called for a military board of inquiry. The witnesses from the first hearing all recanted their statements. He was exonerated of any wrong doing and placed on sick leave the following month. He retired June 1, 1862 and was dead by April 4, 1864, ending a previously spotless 45-year career in the military. His subordinate, Lieutenant John Edie, died ten years later in a government-run madhouse.

McBride and his subordinates and John Frick, the wagon driver, were all charged with negligence but never imprisoned. McBride continued to work at the Arsenal until 1865. He continued to beg the Federal Government to compensate the victims and their families. *The Gazette* had written, "...all are of the poorer classes. A fund should at once be raised for their relief." The request was always denied.



The only known photograph of a victim is that of 19 year-old Fredalina "Melinda" Neckermann. She was killed in Room # 1 with 21 other girls. Her father, Michael, worked in the factory but he survived the explosion. In 1900, three months before his death, Michael Neckermann wrote in his diary, "Our oldest daughter, Fredalina, who was engaged to a brave young man, saddler by trade, lost her life in the terrible explosion...One hand was found with her engagement ring...and buried

in Allegheny Cemetery. Her intended, through grief, enlisted in the Army, and lost his life in a battle in Virginia.”



By 1928, the original monument over the victims’ graves had deteriorated. It was replaced by a new one. The plaque listed the names of the dead and the following sentiment: *“Tread softly this is consecrated dust, forty five (sic) pure patriotic victims lie here. A sacrifice to freedom and civil liberty, a horrid moment of a most wicked rebellion. Patriots! These are patriots graves, friends of humble, honest toil, these were your peers. Fervent affection kindled these hearts, honest industry employed these hands, widows and orphans tears have watered this ground. Female beauty and manhood’s vigor commingle here, identified by man known by Him who is the resurrection and the life, to be made known and loved again, when the morning cometh.”*

On the same day as the Arsenal tragedy, the Rebel Army invaded the town of Sharpsburg, Maryland, near Antietam Creek. September 17, 1862 would forever be known as the bloodiest day of the Civil War. Overshadowed by the enormous death toll in Antietam, the Arsenal explosion became a two-day blip in the production of cartridges for the Union effort.

Submitted by Judith Breitstein

National Registry of Women's Service in the Civil War

Woman of the Month

Lucy Pettway Holcombe Pickens ("Queen of the South")



Born on June 11, 1832 at Westover of Woodstock Plantation, Fayette County, Tennessee. Raised at Wyelucing Plantation, near Marshall, Texas. Died, aged 67, on August 8, 1899, at Edgewood Plantation, near Aiken, Edgefield County, South Carolina.

At seventeen, following the death of her suitor while he was fighting in Cuba, Lucy penned the novel *The Free Flag of Cuba, or the Martyrdom of Lopez: A Tale of the Liberating Expedition of 1851*, which espoused the cause of Cuban liberation from Spain.

With the Civil War looming, she and her husband, Colonel Francis Wilkinson Pickens, US Ambassador to Russia, to whom she was married in 1858, returned to his home in South Carolina. Colonel Pickens was elected Governor of South Carolina, serving from 1860 to 1863, and thus positioning his wife as the State's wartime First Lady. In addition to her social responsibilities, she is credited with playing a role in the Confederate Government as an advisor and confidante to her husband.

A gifted diplomat in her own right, Lucy Holcombe Pickens had received as gifts from the Russian Tsar and Tsarina significant amounts of jewelry and objets d'art. In addition to aiding the Confederacy by other means, she sold some of her Russian jewels in order to fund the establishment of the South Carolina Military Unit which was named the Lucy Holcombe Legion in her honor.

The only woman honored by depiction on Confederate States currency, her portrait appeared on three issues of Confederate currency: the 1862 and 1863 dollar bills and the 1864 hundred dollar bill.

Referred to as "Lady Lucy" in South Carolina, she was known throughout the rest of her Nation as the "Queen of the Confederacy." Also described as "beautiful, brilliant, and captivating" by her male contemporaries, Lucy Holcombe Pickens was considered the beau ideal of the Southern Belle. Claims are made that she was the model for *Gone with the Wind's* Scarlett O'Hara.

Submitted by the "Society for Women and the Civil War" - www.swcw.org

2020 WEST COAST CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

November 6 - 8, 2020



WYNDHAM GARDEN HOTEL, 5090 East Clinton Way, FRESNO, CA 93727-1506, (1-559-252-3611 or 1-559-494-4992), \$99.00 per night, or wyndhamguestreservations.com, (Fresno Airport).

“COMBAT STRATEGY & TACTICS IN 1864 VIRGINIA: LOOKING WITH 2020 VISION AT GRANT VS LEE.”

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

SPEAKERS:

**Gordon Rhea;
Eric Wittenburg;
Chris Mackowski;
Dana Lombardi;
Jim Stanbery, MA.; Professor (Retired)
And Others.**

TOPICS: In Progress.

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

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION: \$200.00 PER PERSON for Weekend, including meals. (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, 730 East Tulare Avenue, Tulare, CA 93274-4336.**