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**2017 Officers:**

**Vacant, President**  
(xxx) XXX-XXXX

**Anne M. Peasley, IPP**  
(530) 320-5112  
[apeasley22@gmail.com](mailto:apeasley22@gmail.com)

**Donald J. Hayden, Vice President**  
(916) 485-1246  
[djhbooklover@yahoo.com](mailto:djhbooklover@yahoo.com)

**Silver N. Williams,**  
Program Director  
(916) 408-4574  
[snw5678@aol.com](mailto:snw5678@aol.com)

**Barbara A. Leone, Secretary**  
(916) 457-3915  
[bleonelachatte@hotmail.com](mailto:bleonelachatte@hotmail.com)

**George W. Foxworth,**  
Treasurer  
(916) 362-0178  
[gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gwfoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

**Dennis Kohlmann, MAL**  
(916) 726-4432  
[gkohlma@aol.com](mailto:gkohlma@aol.com)

**Paul G. Ruud, MAL**  
(530) 886-8806  
[paulgruud@gmail.com](mailto:paulgruud@gmail.com)

**VACANT**  
Editor

**SCWRT Website**  
[www.sacramentocwrt.com](http://www.sacramentocwrt.com)

**Kim Knighton, Webmaster**  
[webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com](mailto:webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com)

# 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

The year is racing by and here we are in September.

I regret being away last month and missing Richard Sickert's presentation and am grateful for Paul Ruud's willingness to preside over the meeting as well. I am sure the discussion was enjoyed by all.

The heat has continued to be unrelenting and there does not seem to be much relief in sight.

We continue to prepare for our November Conference and so far all seems to be going smoothly. There is always a lot of work entailed in these efforts and I am grateful for the valiant efforts of our planners Paul Ruud, George W. Foxworth, Silver Williams, Barbara Leone, Dennis Kohlmann, Ron Perisho, and Nick Scivoletto.

Nancy Samuelson will share her extensive knowledge of the old West and Civil War on September 13th with a talk about "Three Brothers From Missouri." I have enjoyed her presentations at The Renaissance Club, our meetings, and heartily recommend not missing this one. I'll see you there.

**Don Hayden, Vice President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDANCE – 29**

**MEMBERS – 21:** Barbara Leone, Secretary, Roy Bishop, Arnd Gartner, Ron Grove, Nina Henley, Wayne Henley, Chris Highsmith, James Juanitas, Dennis Kohlmann (MAL), Garda Kohlmann, Bernie Quinn, John Rice, Paul Ruud (MAL), Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, Richard Sickert, Shari Sickert, Roxanne Spizzirri, Ray Valdez, Silver Williams (Program Director), John Zasso.

**GUESTS – 8:** Dave Avera, Esther Boeck, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri, Katharine Stockey, Phil Stockley, Dan Wolfe, Faye Wolfe.

1. The meeting was called to order by Paul Ruud who led the Pledge. John Zasso conducted the raffle. Garda Kohlmann showed the Sanitary Commission quilt she made and is donating to the 2017 West Coast Conference auction. Silver Williams announced the Blue-Gray Banquet on September 9, 2017. She introduced Richard Sickert and Shari, his wife and assistant. He talked about The James M. Chapman Affair.
2. At the beginning of the War, the Union had six warships to patrol the entire West Coast. Californians were anxious about Confederates coming to take the gold intended for the Federal War effort.
3. In 1839, John Sutter built a fort/trading post at the junction of the Sacramento and American Rivers. John Marshall constructed a sawmill at Coloma and on January 24, 1848, he discovered gold resulting in the 1849 Gold Rush. By 1860, 23% of registered California voters were natives of states that would form the Confederacy.
4. One character in Richard's talk was Asbury Harpending, born in Kentucky to a wealthy family. He left at an early age. Heading West, he met William Walker who was on an expedition to take over a small, middle, or South American country. This was known as "filibustering." The expedition was stopped by the Federals and Harpending returned home. He joined the Gold Rush taking the Nicaraguan route. Realizing travelers would pay for fresh fruit, a \$4 investment became a \$600 profit when he arrived in San Francisco. He went to Mexico following gold and returned to San Francisco wealthy.
5. He joined the Knights of the Golden Circle, a social organization of middle class businessmen who had strong Confederate sympathies. They believed the Southern way of life should extend South of the United States. William Walker actually was President of Nicaragua for two years until he was executed.
6. Ridgley Greathouse came from a wealthy Kentucky family. He and his brother went to San Francisco, joined the Knights of the Golden Circle, and met Harpending. He also met Alfred Rubrey, a young Englishman who loved the Southern lifestyle. Harpending proposed getting a ship and a Letter of Marque from Jefferson Davis making them privateers. After receiving the document on the way West, he was worried it would be discovered. On ship, he met Mr. & Mrs. Charles Fairfax, wealthy landowners in Marin. She hid the Letter in her dress and it passed Customs. Greathouse acquired the sloop James M. Chapman. It needed to be provisioned and retrofitted. They sailed off Baja California to avoid suspicion and added two cannons. Having returned to San Francisco, they planned to take the Letter to the Mexican Government on the night of March 14, 1863. But unusual activity was noticed on the Chapman. All were arrested and taken to Alcatraz.
7. The crew had been released. Each was sentenced to ten years. On December 8, 1863, the General Amnesty freed them.
8. Greathouse bought a ranch in Mexico. Hardening made some money in gold in Kern County. He, Rubrey, and others schemed to salt mines in Wyoming with diamonds. This was known as the Great Diamond Hoax.
9. Our local area: Greathouse's uncle is in the Old Sacramento Cemetery. The town of Liberty was founded by Southern sympathizers but when the railroad went through Galt, Liberty died, as had the dreams of many.
10. The next Board of Directors' Meeting is Wednesday, September 13, 2017, at 10:00 AM at Brookfield's.

**Barbara Leone, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance following the August 9th meeting was \$5,938.06. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$55.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2017 & 2018

Date	Speaker	Topic
September 13th	Nancy B. Samuelson	"Three Brothers From Missouri"
October 11th	Arnold Kunst	"The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln"
November 8th	Mike Werner	"The First Battle of Charleston Harbor 1863"
December 13th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
January 10th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
February 14th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

## 2017 Membership

The 2017 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2017. The dues are \$20.00 and you can renew at a monthly 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

Remember, you can also pay at any monthly meeting.

## NEWSLETTER CIVIL WAR ARTICLES

Civil War articles/book reviews are welcome. The submission deadline is the 1<sup>st</sup> 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:

[gfoxworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gfoxworth@sbcglobal.net)

Do not submit scanned files since I may need to edit files to combine the **Battle Cry**.

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.

## Christian Rath

Christian Rath was born on October 22, 1833 in Freidestadt, Germany. As a teenage boy, he took part in the riots against the government in 1848 and had to flee the country.



Rath ended up in Jackson, Michigan where he worked as a shoemaker. He married Evaline Henry on May 13, 1857 and the young couple had two sons, John and Lucius (called "Hick"). Life was peaceful until the advent of the Civil War. Rath set up a recruitment office inside his shoe repair shop. He helped to form Company G and eventually enlisted in the 17<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry, First Division, Ninth Corps on June 17, 1862. He began his military career as a Second Lieutenant.

Rath was wounded three months into his service at Antietam. He returned to his Unit and was captured at Spotsylvania but escaped the next day.

At the end of the War, Rath was ordered by Major General Winfield Scott Hancock to oversee the imprisonment of the Lincoln conspirators at the Washington, DC arsenal. After their conviction, he was kept in charge as their jailer and would be their Chief Executioner.

Rath made the hoods used to cover the prisoners' heads and faces. He also fashioned the strips of cloth used to bind their hands and legs. The day before the execution, Rath ordered the arsenal workers to prepare four graves just beyond the scaffolding for Mary Surratt, David Herold, George Atzerodt, and Lewis Paine. The arsenal workers were superstitious and refused to do the digging. Rath had to order soldiers to dig the holes. The soldiers obeyed the order but only dug the graves three feet deep. Rath spent the night before the execution making nooses, using the standard seven to eight turns of the rope. However, for Mary Surratt he used only five turns believing it would be enough to hold her weight. He also believed, like most of the country, that President Johnson would pardon Mary before the execution.

On July 7, 1865, Rath ordered the prisoners to be taken to the gallows. They had to pass their open graves on their last walk. All were reported to be close to collapse except for the stalwart Paine. After the Orders of Execution were read, the ministers for Paine, Atzerodt, and Herold spoke on their behalf. Mary's priests, Father Walter and Father Wiget, had caused such dissension in their advocacy of Mary that Secretary of State Stanton warned them if they spoke one word on the scaffold, they would be removed from Mary's side and not be allowed to comfort or pray with her.

An umbrella was held over Mary Surratt to shield her from the sun and curious eyes. Mary requested that her skirt be bound with a strip of cloth so it would not fly up and expose her legs when she dropped. Rath acceded to her wish. At 1:25 PM, Rath clapped his hands three times and the traps were sprung. The bodies fell through the opened doors. According to reports, Atzerodt and Mary died cleanly but it took David Herold and Lewis Paine over five minutes to die. Paine was the last to be stilled. Perhaps his youth and strength delayed his death.

When it was over, Rath did not allow anyone to approach the body of Mary Surratt. He removed her from the scaffold with his own hands. He then wrote the names of all the deceased on slips of paper, put them in small glass vials and then placed them into the coffins. Still wearing the heavy linen hoods, all four bodies were then placed into raw pinewood coffins, put into the open graves and then hastily covered.

After the hangings, the crowd celebrated with lemonade and cakes. Pieces of the gallows were torn away to be kept as souvenirs, handed down through the generations to follow.

Christian Rath had been called upon to identify the dead body of John Wilkes Booth who he knew well by sight. He supervised his burial under an unmarked spot on the arsenal floor. It was kept there until it was released to Booth's family and moved to an undisclosed place in the Booth family plot in Green-Mount Cemetery in Baltimore on June 26, 1869.

Honorably discharged on July 19, 1865, Colonel Rath (who preferred to be called Captain) returned to his home at 503 East High Street in Jackson, Michigan. He worked at the Post Office and never spoke of his role in the execution until given permission by the government forty-six years later. Rath admitted he was haunted by a recurring nightmare he had where Anna Surratt, Mary's daughter, continued to ask him why he had killed her mother.

Rath's wife, Evaline, died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis on February 16, 1908. (She was 76.). Christian Rath died at age eighty nine on February 14, 1920. He is buried with his wife in Mount Evergreen Cemetery in Jackson, Michigan.



Submitted by Judith Breitstein

# General Lewis Addison Armistead

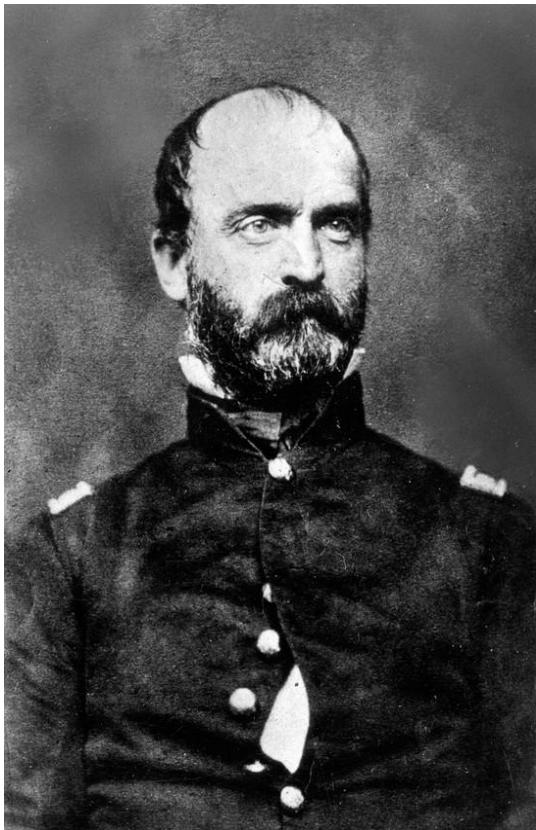
## “Give them the cold steel, boys!”

In order to visit the grave of General Lewis Addison Armistead, you must contact the Rector of Old St. Paul's Church and Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland. The Rector, in turn, puts you in touch with the caretaker who amazingly enough shows up on time to the locked, and admittedly much neglected Cemetery, set just outside a busy Baltimore Hospital. Entering the quiet, gated grounds, we finally get to see the gravesite of Lewis, buried next to his uncle, George Armistead, hero of the Battle at Fort McHenry in the War of 1812.



Armistead, known as “Lo” (short for Lothario) to his friends, was born on February 18, 1817. In 1836, he was forced to resign from West Point due to poor grades and for having broken a plate over Jubal Early’s head. Lewis’ father was finally able to get him a commission as second lieutenant in the 6<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry in 1839.

In 1844, Lewis married Cecelia Lee Love, a distant cousin of Robert E. Lee, with whom he had a son and a daughter. Their daughter, Flora, died in April 1850, at just 3 years old. Cecelia died 8 months later, probably from tuberculosis. In 1853, Armistead married his second wife, Cornelia Taliaferro Jamison. Their infant son, Lewis, died in 1854. In 1855, Cornelia died during the cholera epidemic that killed hundreds including Major E.A. Ogden, Commanding Officer of Fort Riley (Kansas) where they were stationed.



During the 1850's, Armistead served mainly on the frontier where he met and developed a deep friendship with Winfield Scott Hancock and his wife, Almira.

In 1860, at the start of the Civil War, Armistead resigned from the U.S. Army, parting from the friends of so many years. He was made a Major in the Confederate Army. His son, Walker, served as an aide on his staff and as a courier for J.E.B. Stuart.

Armistead was wounded on July 3, 1863 at what came to be known as "The High Water Mark" of the Confederacy. He died two days later on July 5 at 9 A.M. in a Union field hospital. Doctors speculated that his death was not from his wounds...but from fever, infection, the heat, a stroke or heart attack, the erysipelas he had suffered from since he was a young man, or perhaps the lasting depression from the death of his wives and two children. Some even propose the loss of his friendship with Hancock was part of that depression. Lewis was 46 years old and had lived a hard life on the frontier. Before his death, he asked that his watch and valuables be given to Winfield Scott Hancock, who he did not know had also been severely wounded during the Battle, and his bible to Almira Hancock, the General's wife.

Armistead's father claimed his body. It is believed he was buried near his uncle in Baltimore because it was almost impossible to return him to Virginia during wartime.

His first wife, Cecelia, is buried in an unknown location in Mobile, Alabama. Their daughter, Flora, is buried at Jefferson Barracks in Missouri, along with Lewis, his son from his second marriage. Cornelia, his second wife, is buried at Fort Riley Post in Kansas. There is a story that the body of the man carving her tombstone was found sprawled across her grave, another victim of the cholera epidemic. It has also been reported that the ghost of Lewis Armistead has been seen many times weeping at the graveside of this beloved wife.

Submitted by Judith Breitstein



# 2017 West Coast Civil War Conference

Sponsored by Sacramento Civil War Round Table

## Lesser Known Civil War Battles

November 10 - 12, 2017, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Sacramento

### Our Speakers are:

**William C. Davis:** Retired in 2013 as Professor of History and Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech University. He is the author or editor of more than 60 books on the Civil War and Southern history, and consultant and commentator for A&E's "Civil War Journal," and several other television and film productions.

**Dr. Brian S. Wills:** Director of the Center for the Civil War Era at Kennesaw State University. Dr. Wills is a nationally recognized Civil War historian and author of books on Civil War topics.

**Thomas Cartwright:** Is a leading authority and author on the Battle of Franklin who conducted tours of Western Theater battlefields for 20 years. Appeared on many TV shows and is a frequent CWRT speaker.

**Jim Stanbery:** Professor of Political Science and History at Los Angeles Harbor College, and speaker at the West Coast Civil War Conference for more than twenty years. Is a frequent CWRT speaker.

**Theodore Savas:** Is an attorney, adjunct college instructor, award-winning author, Partner and Managing Director of Savas Beatie LLC. He specializes in military history and the American Civil War.

**Ron Perisho:** A member of the Sacramento CWRT and Center for Civil War Photography (CCWP), Co-Editor of "Gettysburg in 3-D," and a Soils Engineer who has collected Civil War Photography for 30 years.

The Conference cost is \$200 per person which includes Friday dinner, Saturday lunch and dinner, as well as all sessions. A full hotel breakfast buffet is included for guests staying at the hotel.

Partial day attendance: **Friday Only** is \$50; **Saturday Only** is \$125; **Saturday Dinner and Lecture Only** is \$50; **Sunday Only** is \$25.

There will be a no-host bar set-up Friday and Saturday evenings for your enjoyment before dinner.

For more information, contact Paul Ruud at 530-886-8806 or by contacting [www.sacramentocwrt.com](http://www.sacramentocwrt.com) where information and registration forms will be available.

Room reservations are available by calling Crowne Plaza directly 877-504-0054 or [www.crowneplaza.com](http://www.crowneplaza.com) Crowne Plaza Hotel has rooms set aside for us at \$124 per night, plus tax. Please mention the Conference.

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Please print this page, fill it out, and return the form with your check for your registration. Make checks payable to: **Sacramento CWRT** and mail to: George W. Foxworth, 9463 Salishan Court, Sacramento, CA 95826-5233.

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