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**2024 Officers:**

**James C. Juanitas,**  
President  
(916) 600-4930  
[jcjuanitas@aol.com](mailto:jcjuanitas@aol.com)

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

**Carol Breiter,** Vice  
President  
(916) 729-7644  
[carollovestoswim@outlook.com](mailto:carollovestoswim@outlook.com)

**VACANT,**  
Secretary

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

**VACANT,**  
Program Director

**Ron Grove, MAL**  
(916) 397-0678  
[rgrove916@outlook.com](mailto:rgrove916@outlook.com)

**Joseph A. Matalone, MAL**  
(916) 837-7616  
[0425jam@comcast.net](mailto:0425jam@comcast.net)

**VACANT,**  
Editor

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

**Kim Knighton, Webmaster**  
[kimknighton@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kimknighton@sbcglobal.net)

# 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

**No Message for now.**

**James C. Juanitas, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, August 14, 2024**  
**R Vida Cantina Restaurant, 7040 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights**

**ATTENDANCE – 11**

**MEMBERS – 8:** James Juanitas, President; Carol Breiter, Vice President; Steve Breiter, Ron Grove, (MAL); Joseph (MAL) & Michelle Matalone, Stuart & Andrea Sheffield.

**GUESTS – 3:** Jeanette Calvin, Bernie (Speaker) & Cathy Quinn.

1. The meeting was called to order by President James Juanitas at 7:01 PM and he led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. President Juanitas notified the group that the Round Table still needs people to fill Secretary, Program Director, and Newsletter positions.
3. There was no business to discuss.
4. New Members and Guests were introduced. There were three guests including the speaker.
5. The raffle was conducted by Joseph & Michelle Matalone. The raffle raised \$33.00.
6. Guest Speaker Bernie Quinn presented an excellent discussion on the Battle of Seven Days, June 27, 1862. One little known fact was that the Confederate charge during this Battle was larger than the well know Pickett's Charge and resulted in more casualties.
7. After questions and answers, the evening ended at 7:56 PM.
8. The next Executive Board Meeting is Wednesday, September 11, 2024, 10:00 AM, at Brookfields near Madison and I-80. Members and guests are welcome.

**Submitted by Carol Breiter for Secretary (Vacant)**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance on July 10th was \$5,534.71. Thanks to Joseph & Michelle Matalone, members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$33.00.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

# Coming Programs for 2024 & 2025

Date	Speaker	Topic
September 11th	"Carol Breiter"	" Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain"
October 9th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
November 13th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
December 11th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
January 8th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
February 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 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](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**

# Zion Hill Cemetery

By the 1790s, fugitive slaves were being smuggled across the Susquehanna River on a regular basis. When the runaways reached Columbia, in the Free State of Pennsylvania, they seemed to vanish into thin air. Their pursuers declared that there must be an “underground railroad somewhere.”

With its bridges, canals, ferry systems, and safe houses, Columbia, so close to the border of the slave State of Maryland, became a key station on the railroad. The town of Wrightsville, in Columbia, was founded by the Wrights, a White Quaker family, in 1726.

William Wright, great grandson of the town’s founder, was “an uncompromising hater of slavery” and deeply involved with aiding the refugees to escape. William Whipper, a wealthy African American businessman, owned railway cars that he fitted with secret compartments to smuggle the fugitives out of state. Joining Wright and Whipper in their endeavors was Robert Loney, a free Black man, who served as one of the earliest conductors of the railroad in Columbia. His family had been one of the first groups of slaves in the early 1800s to find safe refuge in the town.

The large Quaker community, who lived adjacent to Westphalia, the largely Black section of town made up of free African Americans and escaped slaves, could always be counted upon to hide runaways in their barns or homes. Disguises were devised to help slaves escape. Faces were bandaged. Light skinned slaves dressed as “owners” taking their darker skinned chattel out of state. Funeral wagons were filled with “typhoid fever corpses” or “yellow fever victims” who were really bondsmen fleeing their chains.

In 1817, the Mount Zion AME Church had been founded by ex-slaves. This Church became one of the focal points of the Underground Railroad in central Pennsylvania and its parishioners were among the first to take legal action against the new Fugitive Slave Laws starting in 1850.

Today under a highway on Fifth and Linden Street, you will find the small segregated Cemetery called Zion Hill that was originally associated with the AME Church. In 1967, the Cemetery was razed to make way for a new bypass expressway. The headstones were smashed, the broken shards thrown under leaves and debris. A profound disrespect for the people who were buried there was never remarked upon by the newspapers of the day.

Thirty years later, in 1997, Boy Scouts and Vietnam veterans took it upon themselves to clear, clean, and rededicate this Cemetery. Radar was used to find

bodies. Painted white wooden crosses were placed to mark the probable locations of unknowns. The many depressions seen in the ground are unmarked graves that will forever remain unmarked.

Eighteen men from Columbia enlisted and served in the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts United States Colored Troops. One was Steven Swails, the first African American in United States history who served as an officer. His story was depicted in the Academy Award winning film, *Glory*.

A row of gravestones, some of them cenotaphs, were also placed to mark the men of the 18th United States Colored Troops who had lived in Columbia. The graves of other men from Columbia who served with the USCT are also here, a few marked, others not. This is a graveyard of forgotten heroes.

Some of them were:

**John Anderson**, b. 1844. d. 1863, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. John overstated his age by two years in order to be able to enlist. He was described as “mulatto.” John was a shoemaker prior to entering the Army. His pay was docked \$3.39 for damaging his bayonet.

**Franklin Brown**, b .unknown, d. 1876, Co B, 32<sup>nd</sup> USCT. Franklin stood only 5’3”.

**Sgt. John Cooper**, b. 1830. d. March 21, 1889, Co H, 3<sup>rd</sup> USCT. John was a schoolteacher before entering the service. Because he was literate, he was probably made a sergeant. John died destitute in Columbia of tuberculosis.

**James Davis**, birth and death dates unknown, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. James worked as a porter before entering the service. He lied about his age in order to be able to enlist. His pay was docked \$18.45 for losing his musket and bayonet.

**William Edgerly**, b. 1842. d. July 18, 1863, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. William was described as “mulatto.” He was killed in action when his Regiment assaulted Fort Wagner. He was the son of a coppersmith.

**John Edmond (Edmonds)**, b. 1837. d. 1889, Co. I, 32<sup>nd</sup> USCT. John was wounded in his right leg at James Island in South Carolina on February 10, 1865. A few days later, doctors were forced to amputate the leg to save his life.

**George Laurel**, b. unknown, d. 1871, Co K, 25<sup>th</sup> USCT.

**Robert Loney (Looney)**, b.1836. d. January 8, 1869, Co I, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. Robert was a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Columbia. He was sick for a great deal of the time while in service, suffering from rheumatism and chronic hemorrhoids.

**Stephen Miller**, b. unknown. d. 1879, Co H, 25<sup>th</sup> USCT. Stephen worked as a laborer before the War. He served as a cook while in the Army but was continually hospitalized due to illness.

**Henry Parker**, b. unknown. d. July 5, 1863, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. Henry died of disease at Morris Island, South Carolina.

**Samuel Pleasant**, birth and death dates are unknown, Co A, 23<sup>rd</sup> USCT.

**George Prosser**, b. January 1, 1842. d. January 1, 1904, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. George was captured at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Fort Wagner and imprisoned for almost a year at Andersonville. He survived and was mustered out with his Regiment. Prosser served as a minister after the War.

**Warner Ryan**, b. 1844. d. unknown, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. Warner worked in the Quartermaster Department at Morris Island, SC. At discharge, he purchased his Enfield rifle and accessories for \$6.00.

**Corporal George Sweeney**, b. June 30, 1839. d. November 13, 1878, Co I, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. George was paid a bounty of \$100 for enlisting. He was charged \$23.44 for lost equipment. He was also charged \$1.89 for loss of half a shelter.

**John “Jack” Turner**, Birth and death dates are unknown, Co D, 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts. John was described as having a “yellow complexion.” He was a bricklayer before the War. John suffered a bayonet wound to his left foot during the assault on Fort Wagner. Hospitalized at Beaufort, he was discharged from the service as being unable to perform his duties. The surgeon signing his discharge would not recommend him for the Veteran Reserve Corps “because men of color are not allowed in it.” Neither would he recommend John for a pension saying that, “his foot was not in perfect condition before enlistment.”

**Charles Watson**, birth and death dates are unknown, Co. I, 32<sup>nd</sup> USCT. Charles enlisted at age 46.

**John Wesley**, b. 1826. d. 1888, Co A, 25<sup>th</sup> USCT. John was a bricklayer before entering the service. After the War, he married a woman seven years his senior and together they had 5 children.

Fifty three bodies lying under the unmarked wooden crosses are of the Black men of Columbia who volunteered, without pay or pension, to fight the Confederates when they stormed the Wrightsville/Columbia Bridge, on their way to take Harrisburg in 1863. The bridge was not taken and the Confederates were forced to turn back. Only one man was killed in the skirmish, an unknown Black civilian volunteer.

**Submitted by Judith Breitstein**

# Woman of the Month

## Sarah Mapps Douglass

Abolitionist, Educator, Writer, Artist



Born September 9, 1806 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Died September 8, 1882 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Buried at Eden Cemetery in Collingdale, Pennsylvania

Sarah Douglass was born into a prominent Quaker abolitionist family in Philadelphia. She received an excellent education as a child, and later attended college in New York City. She returned to Philadelphia in 1825 and began her career as a teacher. In 1833, she founded her own school for African-American girls. Her standards were high and the curriculum was rigorous -- she was committed to teaching her girls subjects that had previously been reserved for boys, including mathematics and the sciences. In 1854, her school merged with the Institute for Colored Youth (now Cheyney State University). Sarah remained the head of the Primary Department until her retirement in 1877. During her tenure at the Institute, Sarah enrolled at the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania and studied anatomy, female health, and basic medical training; she incorporated these subjects into her curriculum.

In addition to teaching, Sarah was a life-long activist and writer. She contributed articles

to *The Liberator*, *The Colored American*, and the *Anglo-African Magazine*. In 1831, Sarah was a founding member of the Female Literary Association, a group of African-American women dedicated to improving themselves through literary pursuits, and thereby acquiring the skills to enhance their communities and fight for equal rights for all people of color. In 1833, Sarah and her mother were founding members of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, an interracial organization dedicated to total abolition as well as political and legal rights for African-Americans. Sarah also helped found the Stephen Smith Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons, and after the Civil War, she served as Vice President of the Women's Pennsylvania Branch of the American Freedmen's Aid Commission in support of the care of formerly enslaved children.

Sarah was also a self-taught artist. Her known extant work is only eight botanical drawings, often accompanied by poetry, and preserved in the antebellum friendship albums of four women. These works are one of the earliest surviving examples of signed paintings by an African-American woman. It is probable that Sarah was more prolific in her artistic pursuits, but upon her death, she inexplicably requested that her private archives and personal correspondence be destroyed. She died in 1882, one day before her 76th birthday.



Sarah Mapps Douglass, *Fuchsia*, July 15, 1846. Watercolor. Mary Anne Dickerson Album, Library Company of Philadelphia

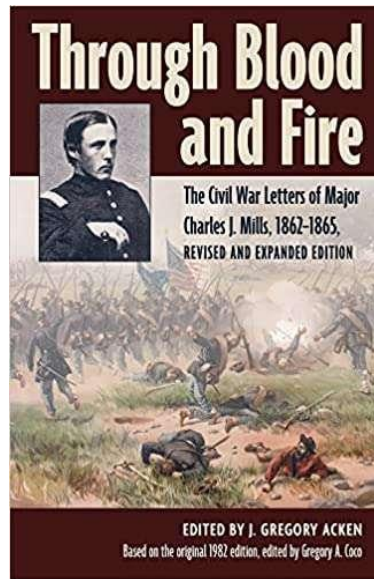
Submitted by the "Society for Women and the Civil War - [www.swcw.org](http://www.swcw.org)"



# Through Blood and Fire: The Civil War Letters of Major Charles J. Mills, 1862-1865, Revised and Expanded Edition

By J. Gregory Acken, ed. *Interpreting the Civil War: Texts and Contexts*. Kent State University Press, 2023. xix + 292 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-60635-454-4.

Reviewed by Joshua Lee Waddell (University of Georgia). Published on H-War (December, 2023). Commissioned by Margaret Sankey.



J. Gregory Acken's updated version of *Through Blood and Fire* builds on a previously published set of 118 letters written by Major Charles J. Mills, an officer in the Union Army from 1862 to 1865. Gregory A. Coco edited and published these epistles in 1982, though the publisher ran a limited print run and only produced 300 copies. Recognizing the value of these sources, Acken's revised version provides additional annotations and headnotes that give a detailed and novel look at this insightful trove of documents.

The letters consist of Mills's correspondence to his many relatives (mostly his mother) during his wartime service in the Union Army. From a well-to-do Boston merchant family, Mills spent the first year of the War seeking an officer's commission. After a lengthy search, he received an appointment as a line officer in the 2nd Massachusetts. The book's First Chapter documents Mills's short stint in this position, as an injury to the thigh at Antietam temporarily halted his military service. Though not fatal, the wound left Mills physically disabled, forcing him to walk with a cane for the remainder of his life. Mills's initial reaction to his wound remains obscure as the letters sent during his recovery have been lost. Despite this setback, Acken researched Mills's social and familial circle to reconstruct his experience during his recovery and found that Mills's thoughts lingered on the War and his brothers-in-arms.

Determined to rejoin the Army, Mills eventually found a commission in 1864 that could accommodate his physical limitations. Mills experienced discomfort when walking, but he could comfortably ride a horse, allowing him to continue to serve on the division staff. Upon his return, the Army appointed him the Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) for the Ninth Corps under Major General Ambrose Burnside. Unlike his initial position in 1862, which placed him in the thick of combat, his duties on the staff revealed a new side of warfare--the strategic

maneuverings of large armies and the petty infighting between generals.

Mills's insightful criticism and praise of his superiors became a hallmark of his letters. While in the Ninth Corps, Mills wrote to his mother regarding the missteps of the often drunk Brigadier General James Ledlie, who commanded the disastrous Union effort at the Battle of the Crater. Few Union commanders escaped the shrewd criticism of Mills's pen. When he first saw Ulysses S. Grant during a review of the 56th Massachusetts, Mills wrote, "I was never more disappointed in my life; a more ordinary, stupid, dirty looking man I never saw in a high position" (p. 75). After the Overland Campaign, the Army transferred Mills to the 2nd Corps under Major General Winfield Scott Hancock. Though Mills loathed Hancock's stern discipline, he marveled at the skilled fighting of the Division during Grant's offensives against Petersburg. After Hancock left the 2nd Corps, Mills served on the staff of Major General Andrew Humphreys, who gained a reputation for bravery by commanding his men close to the line of fire. Though commended for his fearlessness, this reckless tendency would have fatal consequences for Mills. On March 31, 1865, only nine days before Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, a cannon shot hit Mills in the abdomen, throwing him from his horse and killing him instantly.

Mills's military service and detailed letters provide unique insight into many questions of historical interest. Perhaps most notably, his experiences contribute to a growing scholarly literature on the impact of death and disability on Civil War soldiers. Mills rarely commented on his injury, demonstrating a stoic acceptance of his condition and a refusal to allow his disability to dictate his life. As soon as he recovered, Mills sought a commission to serve his country, despite his limited physical capabilities. He could no longer command a line, though he dutifully served on the staff. Mills's letters also help answer more traditional questions in Civil War historiography. For instance, Mills wrote extensively about the 1864 Presidential Election, which showed a marked change in his assessment of Union leadership. As late as November 1862, Mills wrote unfavorably about the direction of the Army and Country. He detested General John Pope and faithfully believed that the twice-relieved George McClellan was "the only man who can lead us to certain victory." In the same letter, Mills wrote that Federal incompetence went to the top, concluding that Abraham Lincoln was "a weak fool" (p. 11). By 1864, however, Mills had a change of heart. He dropped his worship of McClellan and wrote multiple letters to his relatives to convince them to vote for Lincoln. He rejected the peace platform of the Democratic Party and assured his family that Lincoln's reelection would secure victory for the Union Army. Despite his political shift toward the Republican Party, Mills remained unrepentant regarding race. He quickly developed a negative opinion of Black troops in the Union Army and often downplayed their contributions to the War effort. Mills's nuanced understanding of myriad topics can give keen insight to scholars.

In this updated edition of *Through Blood and Fire*, Acken demonstrates expertise in his editing of Mills's letters. He provides detailed annotations about Union Army commanders and Mills's social circle of elite Bostonians and Harvard alumni. The military maneuverings of the Union Army are also well documented, fitting Mills's singular vantage point into the broader strategy of the Federal Army. Likewise, Acken's transitional notes are an invaluable addition to the work, providing a narrative flow where there are gaps in Mills's letters. Acken's superb book deserves a space on the bookshelf of any scholar who studies the Union Army, the experiences of soldiers, and newer questions about the impact of death and disability on the men who fought in the Civil War.

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