



**Volume 65, No. 9  
September, 2025**

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# ***Battle Cry***

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
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<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



## **President's Message**

Hello SCWRT Members! I am sorry to say that I am going to miss September's meeting as Steve and I will be taking our daughter, Jean (SCWRT Secretary), on a trip for her college graduation present!!! Please attend the meeting as we are going to have some great raffle prizes thanks to Linda Gonot! Arnd Gartner is going to give a program on the "What Ifs" – A subject I rarely entertain so it will be good.

I think I am honing my computer skills. With some help, I put together a power point in a day for our meeting. The proper cable really helped. If you are interested in some more historical classes, Sierra College is offering one day courses on such topics as Wyatt Earp and the Donner Party this Fall.

**Carol Breiter, President**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**Wednesday, August 13, 2025**  
**R Vida Cantina Restaurant, 7040 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights**

**ATTENDANCE – 14**

**MEMBERS – 7:** Carol Breiter, President; Jean Breiter, Secretary; Steve Breiter, Ron Grove, Program Director, James Juanitas – Immediate Past President, Marsha Cain-Jutovsky, & Arnd Gartner.

**GUESTS – 4:** Matthew Jutovsky, Katherine Phillips, Larry Spizzirri, & Richard Spizzirri.

**ZOOM – 3:** John Arkansas, Mike Hoover, & Hopi Reams

1. The meeting was called to order by President Carol Breiter at 6:59 PM and she led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. President Breiter shared this day in history.
3. There was no old business.
4. The Raffle was postponed to September as voted on by the members present due to low number of attendance.
5. New Business/Announcements: Linda Gonot, widow of former member, Greg, generously donated many relevant books and valuable vintage board games to our Round Table. We will be raffling them off at appropriate times.
6. Once again, ZOOM was set up and running beautifully by Ron Grove. Many thanks.
7. The scheduled program presenter had to cancel due to jury duty in the Bay Area. President Breiter was able to put together a last minute presentation on the Battle of Chancellorsville.
8. After discussions, the evening ended at 7:43 PM.
9. The next Executive Board Meeting is Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 10:00 AM, at Brookfields near Madison and I-80. Members and guests are welcome.

**Submitted by Jean Breiter, Secretary**

**Treasurer's Report**

The cash balance on August 13th was \$5,108.16. There was no raffle.

**George W. Foxworth, Treasurer**

**The Passing of Donald Braden “Brad” Schall, Jr.**

We are saddened at the passing of Donald Braden "Brad" Schall, Jr., one of the founders of the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz, a long-time member of the Sons of Union Veterans, and a long-time member of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table. Brad had five ancestors who fought in the Union Army during the American Civil War. He was keenly interested in military history and wanted to make sure the military history of Alcatraz was told to visitors. Brad, along with the late Fred Bohmfalk, founded the Friends of Civil War Alcatraz in 2005. His friendliness, integrity, and patriotism were an inspiration to us all. Brad was 85.

# Coming Programs for 2025 & 2026

Date	Speaker	Topic
September 10th	"Arnd Gartner"	"Could the South Have Won--What If"
October 8th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
November 12th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
December 10th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
January 10th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
February 11th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"

## 2026 Membership

The 2026 membership renewal is due on January 1, 2026. 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**

# Woman of the Month

## Ella E. Gibson

The First Woman Chaplain in the U.S. Army

Born: May 8, 1821 at Winchendon, Massachusetts

Died: March 8, 1901 at Barre, Massachusetts

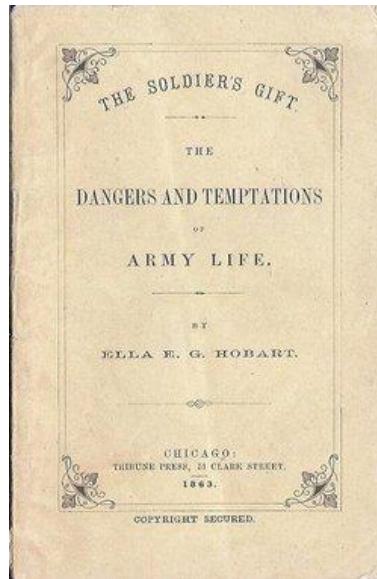
Buried: Meeting House Cemetery, Rindge, New Hampshire

Prior to the Civil War, Ella Gibson was a schoolteacher in Rindge, New Hampshire, as well as an abolitionist writer and lecturer. She married the Rev. John Hobart in 1861, and went to War with him for a time. He served as Chaplain for the 8th Wisconsin Infantry, while Ella worked as a Nurse and Assistant Chaplain for the Regiment.



In 1863, she published a popular booklet intended to boost soldier morale, *The Soldiers Gift: The Dangers and Temptations of Army Life*.

In 1864, Ella was ordained by the Religio Philosophical Society of Saint Charles, Illinois, a spiritualist denomination. She then applied to serve as an official US Army Chaplain but was rejected by the War Department. Nevertheless, on November 22, 1864, with the support of other ministers, State officials, and specifically, the soldiers, Ella was elected as the Chaplain of the 1st Wisconsin Heavy Artillery. The Governor of Wisconsin had initially agreed to commission her, but following the lead of the War Department, reneged on his offer. It should be noted, however, that most Civil War-era Army Chaplains served without commissions. Ella ministered to her Regiment until they were mustered out of service.



After the War, Ella resumed her career as a writer, publishing articles on women's issues for a variety of periodicals. She divorced her husband in 1868. She also petitioned Congress for the back pay she never received while serving as a Regimental Chaplain, and was granted such on March 3, 1869, by a joint resolution of Congress.



A century after her death, the military appropriations bill of 2001, Public Law 107-107 (2002), posthumously granted her the rank of Captain in the Chaplains Corps of the US Army.

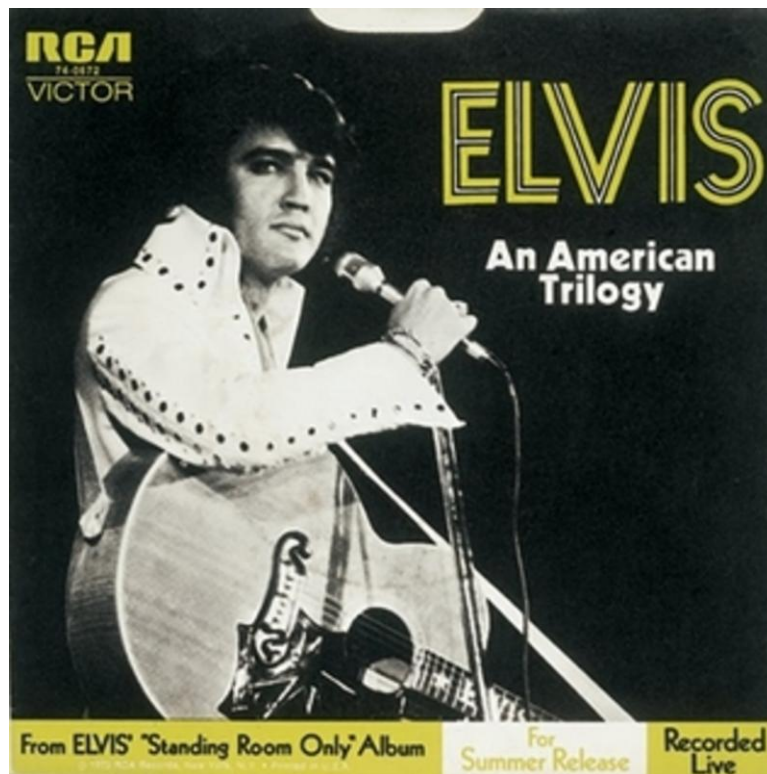
-- J. White and DeAnne Blanton

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



# How are Elvis, the Silver Screen, and the Civil War Related?

Jason R. Edwards, October 18, 2024, [blueandgrayeducation.org](http://blueandgrayeducation.org)



Elvis's 1972 medley, "An American Trilogy," uses three 19th-Century songs: "Dixie," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "all My Trials."

In 2023, on the 50th anniversary of Elvis Presley's historic "Aloha from Hawaii" concert—arguably one of the most watched shows in television history—I proclaimed Elvis the “King of Civil War Historiography” for his stirring performance of “An American Trilogy,” which celebrated the common humanity and sacrifice of both North and South in the Civil War. Due to the positive reception, I will once again explore the unusual pairing of Elvis and the Civil War by asking: what was Elvis's first film?

Elvis aficionados might quickly answer “Love Me Tender”—and they'd be right. But how many know that the film's namesake song and setting are centered on the Civil War?

In 1956, Elvis made his film debut in 20th Century-Fox's *Love Me Tender*, which starred Richard Egan and Debra Paget, while introducing Elvis to movie audiences. This was the only one of Presley's thirty-plus films in which he did not receive top billing. Set during the Civil War, *Love Me Tender* was originally titled *The Reno Brothers*. In it, Elvis plays the youngest of four brothers and the only one (due to his age) not to fight in the War. The film opens with a dramatic Federal payroll train robbery carried out by Confederate cavalry led by Elvis's kin. After their success, but before they can deliver the stolen loot to their commander, the men discover that the War has ended. They now face a moral dilemma: what should they do with the treasure?



Theatrical release poster by Tom Chantrell

Further drama unfolds when the brothers return home after four years of fighting, only to find their father has been killed and discover that they had been reported dead. Though their family is overjoyed to discover the brothers are alive, conflict arises when it is revealed that Clint Reno (Elvis) has married his eldest brother Vance's sweetheart (Debra Paget), unaware that Vance (Richard Egan) had survived.

From the vantage point of 2024, it is fascinating to reflect on the culture of a different time. Although the film provides limited insight into the 1860s, it is notable that in 1956, neither the North nor the South was required to be portrayed as the embodiment of evil. It was assumed that soldiers and families wrestled seriously with questions of honor, fidelity, and moral dilemmas in both relationships and War. While Elvis's famous gyrations may seem anachronistic to the film's 1860s setting, the values assumed by 1950s America now appear even more out of step with the 21st Century. Modern artists rarely share or understand the values of the 1950s—or 1860s, for that matter.

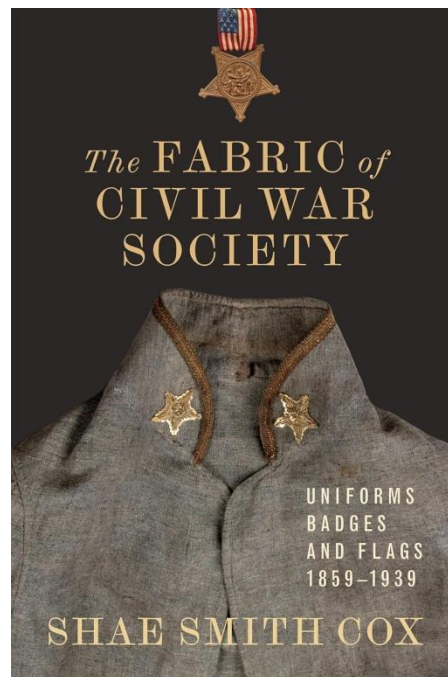
Though *Love Me Tender* will never be regarded as “great” cinema, it was financially successful and established the four-song formula that would shape Elvis's highly successful film career throughout the 1960s. The song “Love Me Tender” is one of Elvis's most beloved, but few realize that its melody originated in 1861 with the publication of “Aura Lee or the Maid with Golden Hair.” W. W. Fosdick (lyrics) and George R. Poulton's (music) song “Aura Lee” became a popular tune for both sides during the Civil War, with soldiers often modifying its lyrics. As such, Elvis's film and musical performance nearly a century later serve as yet another fitting tribute to our shared humanity and American heritage.

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

# The Fabric of Civil War Society: Uniforms, Badges, and Flags, 1859-1939

By Shae Smith Cox. *Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions of the American Civil War Series*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2024. Illustrations. 318 pp. \$48.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8071-8117-1.

Reviewed by Rachel Williams (University of Hull). Published on H-CivWar (August, 2024). Commissioned by Lindsay Rae Smith Privette.



The *Fabric of Civil War Society*, Shae Smith Cox's richly textured study of uniforms, flags, and badges during and after the Civil War, uses material culture to explore not only the contingency of citizenship and the tension between individual and collective identities during the sectional conflict but also the role of objects and performance in constructing and imposing potent collective memories decades after the War's end. A highly readable and meticulously researched study, it joins recent work by Joan E. Cashin and Sarah Jones Weicksel in making a strident case for material objects as sites where the multiple and contradictory meanings of the War were played out.

The first four chapters, which focus on the War years, explore the challenge of outfitting the armies, the practical problems of keeping the armies clothed on the march, the ambivalent emotions elicited by uniform and flags among their wearers and bearers, and the home front industry producing (by hand or by machine) these tangible symbols of the cause(s). Cox amply demonstrates not only that uniforms were far from uniform (despite the increasing codification of dress regulation and eventual streamlining of requisition processes) but also that their practical and symbolic functions did not always neatly align. As tools to condition individuals for battle readiness, uniforms frequently fell short; clothing allowances were insufficient, leaving men ragged, exposed, and



uncomfortable, or else weighed down by heavy material in punishing conditions. Theft was a perennial solution: men stole constantly from each other and from their enemies. Yet uniforms performed complex symbolic functions that transcended these quotidian practical challenges. Take, for instance, the relationship between uniform and honor. Men frequently articulated their service as an aspiration to "live up to" the uniform they wore. Conversely, such actions as disguising oneself in enemy uniform, or seizing an enemy flag and desecrating it, or using it as a means of deception were considered beyond the pale and prompted censure and punishment up to and including execution.

In the remaining four chapters, Cox explains the rapidly changing meanings of Civil War uniforms between Appomattox and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1938 (the last major anniversary at which significant numbers of veterans were present), considering the role and regulation of uniforms and badges in Postwar veterans' organizations and the centrality of material items to reunions and anniversary gatherings. Again, the symbolic potency of uniforms is apparent in the postwar period; Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) badges made from melted-down Confederate cannons and Confederate uniforms being repurposed to clothe prisoners stick out as particularly pointed illustrations of the War's unfinishedness. Moments of heightened patriotism and military mobilization--1898, 1917--often provided opportunities for Confederate veterans and their descendants to reimagine Confederate iconography and claim a space for Rebel badges, flags, and clothing in public pageantry. The material items that became fuel for Postwar "memory machines" were less and less genuine relics of the War itself but, rather, newly minted objects that swiftly replaced their wartime equivalents in the public Civil War imaginary (p. 142). While organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy used the sale of badges to raise funds for their activities and assiduously policed their design, production, and sale, by the early Twentieth Century, the manufacture of ribbons, veterans' uniforms, and other commemorative objects of varying quality increasingly fell to enterprising manufacturers whose profit motivation frequently took precedence over their political allegiances.

Public interest in Civil War uniforms and ephemera is hardly novel: Hollywood is replete with (as Cox indicates, often highly inaccurate and mythologized) depictions of the Blue and Gray, and antiquarian societies, reenactment circles, and certain strands of military history boast considerable expertise in the minutiae of Civil War uniforms and accoutrements. Cox moves beyond the descriptive, however, by mining the political and cultural meanings of these objects and exploring their powerful individual and collective resonances during and--perhaps even more so--after the War. To explore the multiple meanings and uses of these objects, she draws on an impressive array of written, visual, and material sources. Weaving together military orders, regimental ledgers, governmental records, newspaper accounts, minutes of veterans' association meetings, soldiers' papers, and industry reports, she surmounts a pressing challenge of material culture history: how do we recover objects' meanings when those objects no longer exist (whether through destruction, misplacement, or decay)? Yet, where possible, Cox introduces us to extant objects, which she herself has painstakingly collected. There is scope here for even further engagement with the visual record of Civil War uniforms (for instance, the vivid depictions of regimental mustering in Harper's Weekly and Frank Leslie's Illustrated), but the relatively modest list of figures here likely bespeaks the often prohibitive cost of image reproduction rather than any deficiency in

Cox's methods.

Cox's comparative approach is an ambitious and ultimately rewarding one. Evaluating the challenges both sections faced in clothing their armies appears largely to confirm the gulf in resources, industry, and infrastructure between North and South, yet also emphasizes the continuing ubiquity of handmaking, community labor, adaptation, and improvisation regardless of section. Moreover, in comparing how Union and Confederate veterans, their relations, and their descendants used material objects to maintain a visible demarcation between Confederate and Union veterans, assiduously policing in- and out-groups, Cox reveals the contingency and incompleteness of White reconciliation in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

Important, too, is Cox's consideration of what uniforms meant to Black and Indigenous soldiers. As Frederick Douglass's famous rallying cry--"let the Black man get an eagle on his button"--signaled, uniform served to make African Americans legible as men deserving of the full benefits of American citizenship. Uniforms were frequent sources of pride and belonging for Black and Indigenous soldiers; Black communities, too, drew succor and encouragement from the sight of spick-and-span United States Colored Troops (USCT) Regiments on parade. Yet uniforms provoked complex emotions for Black and Indigenous wearers. Upkeep exacerbated the existing pay inequality faced by Black troops. There is evidence that the sight of Black men in uniform, even as it visually refuted White supremacy, strengthened white Southern hostility and placed USCT Regiments in heightened danger. Military authorities on both sides debated the merits of imposing uniform codes on Indigenous soldiers, and Indigenous soldiers struggled to reconcile tribal identities and sartorial traditions with sectional loyalties and aspirations. This ambivalence only deepened after the War. The often peripheral participation of Black and Indigenous people in veterans' organizations revealed their precarious place in the Postwar narratives of the War and the erosion of emancipationist memories of the conflict, despite the attempts of Black GAR members to keep alive their interpretation of the War as a new birth of freedom. Increasingly, by the end of the Nineteenth Century, people of color were deliberately incorporated into Confederate reunions and displays, used, Cox says, as "props" to shore up the Lost Cause by promoting the service of supposed "Black Confederates."

Future scholars will no doubt build on Cox's work to explore less fully developed themes: there is surprisingly little discussion of gender and masculinity here (a brief passage about women soldiers notwithstanding), and there is scope to probe the intersection of material and environmental histories to consider the haptic and emotional dimensions of dirt, discomfort, recycling, disposal, and destruction. The very good treatment of Black and Indigenous uniform wearers leaves comparatively untouched the role of material culture in constructing and legitimizing sectionally specific whiteness. These critiques should not take away, however, from Cox's wide-ranging and thematically coherent work. The Fabric of Civil War Society firmly situates uniforms, badges, and flags as potent repositories of meaning and memory and will make valuable reading for scholars of the Civil War battlefield, the home front economy, and Postwar memory making.

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