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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

Hello all! Sorry I couldn't be at the September meeting – I was enjoying a much needed vacation. I'm happy to report that ZOOM works very well even out of the country. Very impressive raffle prizes too. Thanks Ron! So happy to see Arnd present a program too. I love to see members share their knowledge and areas of interest.

We have programs for the rest of the year scheduled. And hope to have more members present and maybe even bring some friends to join!! See you on the 8th at R Vida.

Carol Breiter, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, September 10, 2025
R Vida Cantina Restaurant, 7040 Sunrise Boulevard, Citrus Heights

ATTENDANCE – 17

MEMBERS – 14: James Juanitas – Immediate Past President; Paul Ruud, Vice President; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Ron Grove, Program Director, , Marsha Cain-Jutovsky, Arnd Gartner, Brendan Harris, Joseph (Member-at-Large) & Michelle Matalone, .Bernie Quinn, Patricia Ruud, Stuart & Andrea Sheffield, & Stephen Shiflett.

GUESTS – 3: Rick Davis, Matthew Jutovsky, & Jamie Lazarus.

ZOOM – Unknown:

1. The meeting was called to order by Immediate Past President (IPP) James Juanitas at 7:02 PM and he led the Pledge of Allegiance. President Carol Breiter was out of town.
2. IPP Juanitas shared this day in history.
3. IPP Juanitas introduced new members and guests. No new members but we had three guests.
4. There was no old business and no announcements.
5. The Raffle was conducted by Joe and Matalone. Thanks to members and guests, the Raffle collected \$37.00.
6. IPP Juanitas introduced the speaker, Arnd Gartner. His topic was "Could the South Have Won--What If." Speaker Gartner discussed a few topics: The North had more population and more industry; rich man war, poor man fight; newspapers told each side what the other side was doing; and both sides had riots.
7. After discussions and questions, the evening ended at 7:49 PM.
8. The next Executive Board Meeting is Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 10:00 AM, at Brookfields near Madison and I-80. Members and guests are welcome.

Submitted by George W. Foxworth for Jean Breiter, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance on September 10th was \$5,219.76. Thanks to members, guests, and Joe and Michelle Matalone, the raffle brought in \$37.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2025 & 2026

Date	Speaker	Topic
October 8th	"James Juanitas"	"The United States Navy During the Civil War"
November 12th	"Bernie Quinn"	"Phil Sheridan"
December 10th	"Ron Grove"	"Civil War Trivia Game"
January 10th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
February 11th	"To Be Determined"	"To Be Determined"
March 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:

gwoffworth@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.

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

Plantation Cook, Entrepreneur, Author

Born June 1831 in Orangeburg, South Carolina

Died January 9, 1915 in San Francisco, California

Buried at Cyprus Lawn Memorial Park, Colma, California

The holidays are a time of the year that evoke thoughts of food and history. One interesting item that captures the intersection between these thoughts is a cookbook by Mrs. Abby Fisher, a formerly enslaved woman, who during her life received an array of accolades for her culinary creativity.

Abby Clifton was born in 1831 on a plantation in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Her mother, Abbie Clifton, was an enslaved domestic servant and her father, Andrew James, was the French-speaking owner of the plantation. As she grew up, Abby developed and perfected her distinctive southern flavors as an enslaved plantation cook. Her signature recipes combined foods and spices from Africa with Southern American staples.

After the Civil War, she eventually made her way to San Francisco with her husband, Alexander C. Fisher, and four of their 11 children. She used her culinary skills to establish a successful upscale catering business and, with her husband, she created a flourishing pickle, jam, and preserve manufacturing business.

Fisher won the "Diploma," the highest award possible from the Sacramento State Fair. She also won both a bronze and a silver medal from the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute Fair. One juror noted, "Her pickles and sauces have a piquancy and flavor seldom equaled, and when once tasted, not soon forgotten."

Following these accolades, she was commissioned by the Women's Institute of San Francisco and Oakland to compile her recipes. The goal was to document her style of southern cooking for future generations. This presented a considerable challenge. Even though Abby was a successful entrepreneur, neither she nor her husband could read or write. Being a resourceful person, she enlisted the assistance of her clientele, who recorded her recipes as she dictated them.

Her cookbook, *What Mrs. Fisher Knows about Old Southern Cooking, Soups, Pickles, Preserves, Etc.*, was a pioneering work. It was one of the first cookbooks to provide detailed instructions and precise measurements as Abby wanted to ensure that even a novice cook would have success using her recipes. Her cookbook was also one of the first by an African-American, and the oldest known cookbook by a formerly enslaved person.

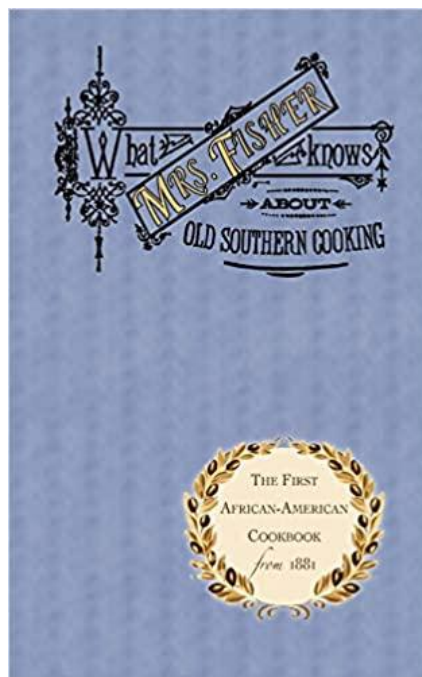
It was published by the Women's Co-operative Printing Union and contained 160 recipes. Included are familiar favorites: sweet potato pie, lemon sherbet, fried chicken

and corn bread; African-inspired dishes: corn fritters, black-eyed peas, okra gumbo, and jambalaya; and others that reflect a time gone by -- green turtle, mock turtle, terrapin stew, and calf's head. Abby also provided recipes to improve health: Blackberry Syrup for Dysentery in Children; Tonic Bitters to strengthen and produce appetite; and Pap for Infant Diet.

Abby Fisher passed away in 1915 at the age of 82. Thanks to her extraordinary journey from enslaved plantation cook to business owner and author, her culinary excellence lives on.

On June 10, 2003, the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation in Ann Arbor, Michigan, opened a lunch-style restaurant, Mrs. Fisher's Southern Cooking, created and named in her honor. The menu reflects her specific cuisine and highlights her culinary talents. In addition, reprints of her cookbook are for sale.

Perhaps one reason the Museum created this restaurant is so visitors can sample a taste of history. For Thanksgiving and other occasions, you have a similar opportunity as Abby's cookbook is still available both online and as a hardcopy reprint.



Online: [What Mrs. Fisher knows about old southern cooki... \(msu.edu\)](http://msu.edu/WhatMrsFisherKnowsAboutOldSouthernCooking)

Reprint: [What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking: Fisher, Abby: 9798695643244: Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9798695643244)

- *Lavonda K. Broadnax*

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

A Gentleman Rescued from Obscurity

Hal K. Litchford, September 23, 2024, blueandgrayeducation.org



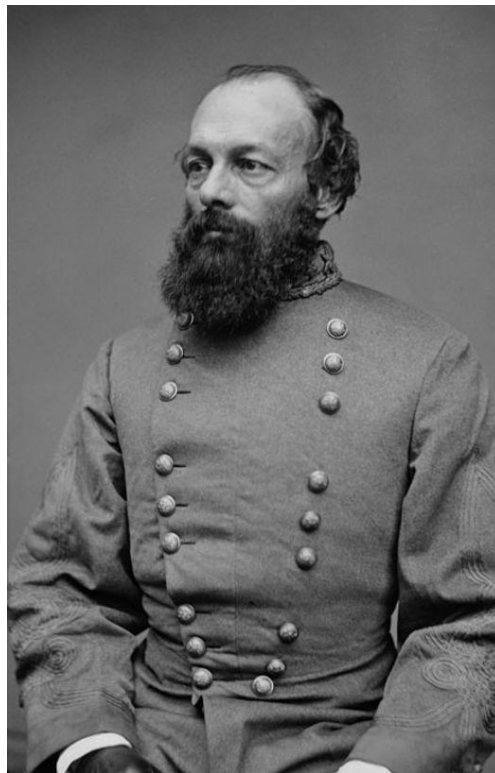
Confederate Memorial in Lewisburg, Tennessee, including Captain Dysart's name

One of my earliest reference books, *A Photographic Supplement of American Swords*, features a sword that has always intrigued me. Manufactured by the College Hill Arsenal in Nashville, this particular cavalry officer's saber is inscribed with the name "A. A. Dysart." He is identified in the book as Capt. Alfred A. Dysart of Co. D, 4th Tennessee Cavalry, who was killed in action at Thompson's Station in March 1863.

The sword also appears in *Confederate Presentation and Inscribed Swords and Revolvers*. Little else is known about this Confederate officer.

Growing up in Middle Tennessee with a keen interest in Nashville swords, and knowing that the Battle of Thompson's Station was a notable victory for Forrest, I made it my personal mission to learn more about Captain Dysart and rescue him from historical obscurity.

Alfred Allen Dysart was born on October 9, 1832, in Marshall County, Tennessee. When the War began, he was a 28-year-old bachelor living alone in the northern part of the County along the Duck River. In the 1860 census, his occupation is listed as "gentleman." Like many young men in the area, he was an accomplished horseman. In November 1861, Dysart and a group of cavalry volunteers from the region rode to Camp Cheatham, a major recruiting and training base near Nashville, where they enlisted in Company D of what would become McLemore's 4th Tennessee Cavalry, Confederate States Army. Dysart was elected Lieutenant.



Edmund Kirby Smith, ca 1862

At the same time, College Hill Arsenal offered several varieties of finely etched officers' swords for private purchase. These swords featured a blank panel in the etching, allowing the buyer to have his name engraved. Surviving examples of these swords are almost

exclusively traced back to officers at Camp Cheatham. Dysart was one of the new officers who purchased a College Hill sword and had his name etched into the panel.

The early history of Dysart's Regiment is somewhat convoluted in 1862. The Regiment took part in the Kentucky Campaign under General Kirby Smith, and Dysart was promoted to Captain in June of that year. By November, the Regiment was serving under General Nathan B. Forrest and participated in his West Tennessee expedition, which culminated in the Battle of Parker's Crossroads.

Dysart's next major engagement came on March 5, 1863, at the Battle of Thompson's Station, Tennessee. The Confederates, commanded by General Earl Van Dorn, left their base in Spring Hill to confront a Federal reconnaissance force advancing from Franklin. The two sides clashed at Thompson's Station, with Forrest holding the Confederate right. Dismounted, the 4th Tennessee Cavalry assaulted the Union line east of the Franklin Pike. Before the attack, Dysart had a premonition of his death. He told one of the Company's horse holders, Sgt. D. M. Stegall, that he would be killed and entrusted him with his watch and pocketbook for delivery to his family. Tragically, Dysart's premonition proved accurate. He was mortally wounded in the front yard of the Elijah Thompson house, near a cedar tree.

Dysart died three days later and was buried in Round Hill Cemetery in Belfast, Marshall County, just 35 miles from Thompson's Station. Today, his name is inscribed on the Confederate Memorial in the court square of Lewisburg, Tennessee, among the County's native sons who perished during the Civil War. His inscribed sword now resides in the collection of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, formerly Battle Abbey, in Richmond, Virginia.

Submitted by the Blue and Gray Education Association

Engineering in the Confederate Heartland

By Larry J. Daniel. Baton Rouge Louisiana State University Press, 2022. 222 pp. \$45.00, (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8071-7785-3.

Reviewed by Steven G. Collins (St. Louis Community College at Meramec).
Published on H-Sci-Med-Tech (October, 2023). Commissioned by Penelope K. Hardy.



Larry J. Daniel's *Engineering in the Confederate Heartland* provides a much-needed examination of Confederate engineers during the Civil War. At the same time, Daniel tries to counter Thomas Army's assertion in *Engineering Victory: How Technology Won the Civil War* (2016) that the South did not have the educational system, industrial economy, or mechanical skills the North possessed to meet the demands of this long and destructive war. Daniel successfully shows the trials and tribulations that Southern engineers faced. However, his argument that the South did possess the needed engineers and expertise is not convincing.

The book starts out strongly with an overarching narrative of the geographic and engineering challenges that Southern engineers would face. Daniel does an excellent job laying out the organizational issues and the personalities of different commanders. He then takes us into the dirt, mud, and drama of building forts along the Mississippi River north of Memphis, Fort Pillow, and Island Number 10. This section is riveting, as he describes the workers' struggles, poor planning, and angry disagreements between commanders and engineers, as well as how politics in Richmond

"determined engineering goals" (p. 13). He also shows how failure greeted most of these efforts. The first three chapters of the book are outstanding.

Unfortunately, the narrative loses its way when the author shifts focus to the larger region of Middle and East Tennessee. Although he provides important information about the challenges that the engineers faced, the book gets bogged down in unnecessary details and antiquarian concerns. For example, the reader is subjected to constant quotes detailing a shortage of pickaxes, shovels, hammers, and so on, much of which could have been relegated to endnotes. As well, Daniels unearths significant information about individual engineers, but delving deeply into their specific backgrounds saps the narrative of its drive. One sentence includes fifteen engineers' names. We find out that one served with his cousin in another regiment, and another owned a New Orleans jewelry store. This all might be interesting, but it distracts from the larger point.

As for disproving Army's thesis in *Engineering Victory*, Daniel's arguments fall short. Too many qualifications--or ifs, ands, and buts-- buttress his argument. For example, in his most frontal assault on Army's argument, Daniel writes, "There was sufficient talent in that one City alone [Nashville] to form an entire engineering battalion, if the Confederacy had been so inclined" (p. 93, emphasis in the original). Unfortunately, "if" is not a strong argument. Clearly, strategy and politics hurt the organization and effectiveness of Confederate engineers, but the story told here is more often one of frustration, disappointment, and a shortage of engineers.

This book should be consulted by Civil War historians, especially those interested in logistics and engineering. As well, Civil War enthusiasts will find the detailed aspects of the engineering efforts and genealogical research on many of the engineers valuable. As for future research built on this work, slave labor is mentioned often, but this is not the focus of the study. Thus, this book offers a starting point for scholars interested in the Confederate Government's use of enslaved Blacks in building forts, bridges, and earthworks during the Civil War.

Submitted by Bruce A. Castleman, Ph.D.