



**Volume 55, No 12
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Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
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President's Message

Blessings for the Holiday Season!

The 2015 West Coast Conference was wonderful and packed with lectures. I got reacquainted with many familiar attendees and also made some new friends. We had a very brief discussion as a Board while there, and agreed to take 2017 for our next Conference. Start generating those ideas for a theme and speakers you'd love to hear.

This month, we have our own tall, handsome Nick Scivoletto. Just in time for our celebration of Saint Nick! He will be presenting a talk on "General Joe E. Johnston." Most of us have enjoyed Nick's vast knowledge of the Civil War. We look to him to definitively settle bar bets and answer trivia questions. We trust his depth and breadth of research and esoterica. Let's have fun with this. We have more than a week to review everything we know about Joe Johnston. Can any among us come up with one fact that Nick may not know? Just one measly smidgeon of a fact, that's all.

Sigh. My money's on Nick.

As we approach the Holidays, let us also enjoy one another, despite our differences. Let us all remind ourselves of what a luxury we have to agreeably disagree. Let us all remind ourselves of what America is and how this War we study so rigorously can teach us everything we need to know to navigate through our lives, to deeply love and cherish our united country, and never to forget her values.

Peace.

Anne Peasley, President

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, November 11, 2015
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 33

MEMBERS – 23: Anne Peasley, President; Don Hayden, Vice President; George W. Foxworth, Treasurer; Paul Ruud, Secretary; Silver Williams, Program Director; Roy Bishop, Alice Corley, Monica Foxworth, Arnd Gartner, Robert E. Hanley, IPP; Nina Henley, MAL; Wayne Henley, MAL; Dennis Kohlmann, Arnold Kunst, Barbara Leone, Rick A. Peasley, John Rice, Ed Rill, Nancy Samuelson, Nick Scivoletto, Richard Sickert, John Zasso, Vivian Zasso.

GUESTS – 10: Seanna Curler, Chad Hall, Bill Johnson, Bret Lonsway, Art Mark, Gloria Perez, Dr. Tad Smith, Ben Tong, Sue Tong, Ray Valdez.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Anne Peasley followed by the Pledge.
2. John Zasso sold last minute tickets and conducted the raffle.
3. A slate of officers to serve the Round Table for the next two years was voted into office. The line-up will be President Anne Peasley, Vice President Don Hayden, Secretary Barbara Leone, Treasurer George Foxworth, Program Director Silver Williams, and Members at Large Dennis Kohlmann and Paul Ruud.
3. Our speaker, Dr. Tad Smith, returned to our podium from nearby Dixon, California. The “Failed Foreign Policy of the Confederacy” was the subject of his presentation.
4. Tad began by placing the slavery situation in context. All of the states began their statehoods with slaves among their residents. However, the industrialized northeast moved away from slavery early on and the southern states, primarily those in the Mississippi Delta, where cotton was the driver of the economies, found slavery gradually expanding.
5. Cotton linked Great Britain to the southern states even though slave trade there had been banned for years. Cotton was like oil today in the role it played with many economies. Great Britain used four times as much cotton as did the northern US states and one out of six British jobs depended on cotton. This cotton dependency seemed to make the prospect of British recognition and support of the Confederacy a reasonable goal.
6. The Confederacy decided to let cotton be the diplomatic weapon. The needs of Britain and France for cotton would surely cause them to break the Union blockade so the South did not export any cotton to Europe in 1861. Unfortunately for the South, there happened to be a glut of cotton in Europe at that time so the absence of southern cotton did not create the anticipated need.
7. The “Trent Affair” was typical of the difficulties experienced by the Confederate international agenda. Southern representatives Mason and Slidell were on board the British ship Trent heading for Europe when the ship was boarded by the Union Navy and the ambassadors captured. This was in August of 1861. Mason ultimately headed again to England in January of 1862 since Lincoln chose to release the captured ambassadors. Lincoln stated, “Let’s fight one war at a time.” Slidell found his way to France where he remained the rest of the War, but was not able to bring French support to the Confederacy.
8. Several desperate plans were conceived and tried as the Civil War moved toward its conclusion. None of these were successful. The South lost but King Cotton survived – among other needs it was used to pay off the debts from fighting the War.
9. President Peasley thanked Tad with kind words and good wine for an excellent presentation.
10. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM. The next Board Meeting will be Wednesday, December 9, 2015.

Paul Ruud, Secretary

Treasurer’s Report

The cash balance following the November 11th meeting was \$4,785.43. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$56.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2015 and 2016

Date	Speaker	Topic
December 9th	Nicholas Scivoletto	"General Joseph E. Johnston"
January 13th	Paul G. Ruud	"Jefferson Finis Davis"
February 10th	Jim Lane	"Free State of Jones"
March 9th	George Beitzel	"Flight Into Oblivion"
April 12th	Susan Williams	"Two Brothers in the Civil War"
May 11th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

2016 Membership

The 2016 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2016. 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 1st 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

Do not submit scanned files since I 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.

A Report On The 31st Annual West Coast Civil War Conference by George W. Foxworth

The 31st Annual West Coast Civil War Conference was held on November 13 - 15, 2015, at the Tulare Historical Museum in Tulare, California. The host hotel was the Hampton Inn and Suites--Tulare.

The Conference was hosted by the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table (CWRT). "**1865**" was the theme and many enlightening presentations by the distinguished speakers filled the weekend. The speakers were Thomas Y. Cartwright, Dr. James Stanbery, Edward Alexander, Michael Oddinino, Michael Green, Dr. Brian Clague, Ron Vaughan, Sam Craghead, and Ron Perisho. Also in attendance were Ted Savas, Lee Meredith, Duane Benell, Steve Madden, and other Civil War enthusiasts throughout California.

The Sacramento CWRT was represented by Fred Bohmfalk, Harvey Cain, Mitch and Ardith Cnota, Alice Corley, George W. Foxworth, Monica Foxworth, Don Hayden, Marsha Jutovsky, Dennis Kohlmann, Kim Grace Long, Anne Peasley, Ron Perisho, Paul Ruud, Brad Schall, and Silver Williams (a total of 16).

All presentations were excellent. Jim Stanbery spoke on "The Strategic Situation in Early 1865" and "Johnston Surrenders to Sherman: Early Reconstruction." Brian Clague presented "Civil War Medicine: A New Perspective." Thomas Cartwright spoke on "Forrest's Operations in 1865." Ron Vaughan spoke on "The Mobile Campaign of 1865 and "Battle of Palmito Ranch and Jo Shelby's Exodus." Edward Alexander presented "Grant's Attempts to Take Petersburg" and "The Breakthrough at Petersburg." Michal Oddinino spoke on "Appomatox Surrender." Michael Green presented "Sherman's Carolina Campaign." Ron Perisho gave us an outstanding 3-D presentation on "1865 Civil War Photos." Sam Craghead spoke on "Cruise of the CSS Shenandoah."

The Conference was a complete success and the San Joaquin Valley CWRT is commended for their excellent work. Special recognition goes to Michael Green, Ron and Linda Vaughan, Dr. Brian and Linda Clague, Tulare Historical Museum, and others from the San Joaquin Valley CWRT. Also, James Stanbery and Doug van der Weyde supplied us with outstanding fireworks on their PowerPoint presentations. All were pleased. Finally, Fred Bohmfalk and Brad Schall presented the 2015 "Jerry Russell Award" to Ted Savas.

Looking ahead to 2016, the 32nd Annual West Coast Civil War Conference will be hosted by the Pasadena and Orange County CWRTs. The topic is "**War and Remembrance**," and will be at the Crowne Plaza Costa Mesa Hotel, Costa Mesa, CA. The dates are October 28 – 30, 2016.

Epilogue

The 2017 Annual West Coast Civil War Conference will be hosted by the Sacramento CWRT. The dates, venue, and topic are unknown at this time.

OPINION

A President Who Lived and Died for Liberty

By James L. Swanson
And Michael F. Bishop

One hundred and fifty years ago, on April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln went to the theater.

The day began as one of the happiest of his life. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender on April 9 had elated him, and he had been more buoyant than at any other time during his presidency. Three-quarters of a million men had fallen

It was not to be. On what Walt Whitman would soon call that "moody, tearful night" Lincoln became the war's final casualty.

We know what happened next: Lincoln's triumphant arrival at Ford's Theatre; the cheering audience; the strains of "Hail to the Chief"; a single gunshot; the gleaming knife flourished by the murderer; the leap to the stage; the assassin's exultant cry of "Sic Semper Tyrannis"; his escape into the wings; a galloping horse; and a dying president lying on the floor in a playhouse gone mad. Lincoln was carried across the street to the cramped back bedroom of a boarding house, where began the long death-bed vigil from midnight to dawn that transformed him from mortal man to secular saint.

One reporter for the New York Times wrote that "a stroke from Heaven laying the whole of the city in instant ruins could not have startled us as did word from Ford's Theatre a half hour ago." The country's mood changed overnight from inexpressible joy to unimaginable sorrow.

One million Americans viewed his corpse when it was placed on public display in the 12 great cities of the North, including Philadelphia, New York and Chicago. More than seven million watched his funeral train pass as it chugged from Washington westward to Illinois. Whitman immortalized that journey in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd": "Here, here that slowly passes, I give you my sprig of Lilac."

Clanging bells, fragrant flowers and black bunting and crepe—these



A Currier & Ives engraving depicting President Lincoln's assassination, April 14, 1865.

were the sounds, symbols and scents of the spring of 1865. One hundred and fifty years later, what does the death of Abraham Lincoln mean?

It is obvious but too often overlooked that Lincoln died a martyr for civil rights. Already the prime instrument of the abolition of slavery, through the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment he masterfully maneuvered through Congress, Lincoln in the last speech of his life called for voting rights for black Americans. Among the crowd at the White House, as the president spoke from a second-floor window, was John Wilkes Booth. Incandescent with rage and spewing racial hatred, he resolved to assassinate Lincoln. Seventy-two hours

later, he fired the fatal shot.

The first presidential assassination affirmed the enduring strength of our form of government. By April 1865 American institutions had survived their severest trial, but the constitutional fabric of the nation was further frayed in the aftermath of Lincoln's murder. The Union, though, would endure; the United States would assume its place as the dominant world power. American democracy transcended any one man, even one as great as Lincoln.

And yet, the death of Lincoln did grave harm to the Union he had given his life to save. Not least of the tragedies to befall the nation that day was the accession to power of the coarse and inept Vice President Andrew

Johnson, who himself might have died had the assassin dispatched to murder him not lost his nerve. Crude and inflexible, Johnson botched the reconstruction of the nation. Lincoln had rightly considered Reconstruction "the greatest question ever presented to practical statesmanship," but his successor lacked his principled pragmatism.

Eager to usher Confederate states back into the Union, and himself a racist, Johnson was indifferent to the callous treatment of newly freed slaves. The eventual reconciliation of North and South came at the expense of civil rights for black Americans, which poisoned race relations for a century.

The death of Lincoln reminds us that leadership matters, and that much depends on the occupant of the White House. Lincoln lived and died for liberty, union and equal rights for all people. With every fiber of his being, Abraham Lincoln believed in American greatness and exceptionalism.

As we mourn him on the anniversary of his death, we must do more than yearn for great leaders like Lincoln. We must cultivate and elect them.

Mr. Swanson, senior legal scholar at the Heritage Foundation, is the author of "Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer" (William Morrow, 2006). Mr. Bishop has held several posts on Capitol Hill and in the White House, and is the former executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

The Assassin's Assassin

Some hailed the hat-maker turned evangelical as Lincoln's avenger. Some condemned him as a zealot who took the law into his own hand.

Gerard Helferich

April 26, 2015

Unlike novelists, who are free to invent their tales, nonfiction writers must discover theirs in the real world. And the process can be fraught, sifting through the countless stories out there and hoping to find one worth telling. Will it resonate with a wider meaning beyond its specific circumstances? This question always lurks in the gloomy recesses of a nonfiction writer's mind. But it is nudged to the fore by Scott Martelle's "The Madman and the Assassin," a slim account of "the man who killed the man who killed Abraham Lincoln."

Thomas (later "Boston") Corbett was by all descriptions an odd fellow. Born in England, he came with his family to New York in 1840 at the age of 8. As a teenager, he went to work finishing silk hats, and after he married he moved among various hat-making centers in New England and elsewhere. In 1856, his wife died, and Corbett fell to drinking. Rescued by evangelical Christians, he swore off alcohol and joined the Methodist Church. He took Boston as his given name, in honor of the city of his conversion, and in imitation of Christ, he grew a beard and let his hair spill to his shoulders. He proselytized on street corners, and during prayer meetings, he was so vociferous in his praise that the congregation took to calling him the "Glory to God man." At the age of 25, tormented by carnal urges, he castrated himself, a process that Mr. Martelle describes in clinical detail.

When the Civil War came, Corbett enlisted in the Union Army, where his comrades found him, as Mr. Martelle writes, "eccentric beyond tolerance." More than once, Corbett faced military discipline for disorderly conduct and abandoning his post. During several tours of duty he saw only limited action, but in June 1864, he was captured and shipped to the notorious Prison Camp of Andersonville in Americus, GA. Starved and forced to live in filthy conditions, he contracted scurvy and the intestinal disorders that would trouble him for the rest of his days. Yet as he led prayer services and conducted funerals in the Camp, he wasn't overly concerned for his well-being. He was convinced that he enjoyed God's special protection. After nearly five months he was paroled and, by January 1865, had recuperated enough to rejoin his regiment, the Sixteenth New York Cavalry.

Which was how Sgt. Corbett found himself part of the detail pursuing John Wilkes Booth through the Virginia countryside in the feverish days after Lincoln's assassination. Having tracked Booth and a co-conspirator to a tobacco barn near Port Royal, Virginia, the soldiers surrounded the building and, when Booth refused to surrender, set it ablaze. Corbett peered through a gap in the barn wall and, seeing Booth raise his rifle as if to fire, drew his pistol and took a single shot. The bullet entered the assassin's skull at a point eerily similar to where Booth's had penetrated Lincoln's, with the same mortal result. Later, Corbett prayed on the matter and concluded that he had no cause for remorse, that the killing was, in his words, "an act of duty in the sight of God."

THE MADMAN AND THE ASSASSIN

By Scott Martelle, Chicago Review Press, 226 pages

The assassin's assassin became a celebrity, hailed by some as "the avenger of Lincoln" and condemned by others as a zealot who had taken the law into his own hands. Collecting a share of the reward on Booth's head as well as a meager military pension, Corbett returned to hat making, though his real passion remained evangelical work. According to a roommate during this time, he was "a nervous, excitable man ... with a keen, but wild look in his eyes, and an interminable restlessness of body and limb." Ready to take offense at any perceived slight, he always kept a gun close to hand.

As the economy crumpled in the Panic of 1873, Corbett moved to Kansas and tried his hand at homesteading. But after pulling his pistol one time too many—on the sergeant-at-arms of the Kansas House of Representatives—he was committed to an asylum, seemingly for good. (There would come another twist in the curious tale of Boston Corbett, though I won't divulge it here.)

Mr. Martelle has done an admirable job of researching Corbett's life, combing through archives and period newspapers for every drab of information. What was it about his anti-hero that excited Mr. Martelle's imagination? As the author explains in the book's final pages, it wasn't Corbett's uniqueness but his ordinariness, the fact that he was a "run-of-the-mill American—albeit a strange one—who did his job as a hatter, and then a soldier, and in the process, inextricably linked himself with an unforgettable event in American history."

Serious students of the Civil War may be happy to learn more about the obscure oddball who killed the assassin. But that same audience may find the book's chapters on Booth, the assassination and the manhunt rather slow going, since it has all been chronicled well and fully elsewhere. More casual readers may feel their interest flagging in the final chapters, which offer a minute account of Corbett's later life, including his health problems and financial straits. As for the story's wider resonance, it is hard to see Boston Corbett as more than a historical footnote. If things had gone differently on that April morning, Mr. Martelle acknowledges, his protagonist "would never have risen from the background of daily life." But, he concludes, "such is the nature of fleeting fame, and of small lives brushing up against large moments in history."

Mr. Hefner's most recent book is "Theodore Roosevelt and the Assassin: Madness, Vengeance, and the Campaign of 1912."

Submitted by Silver N. Williams

Christmas Eve 1862 from Harper's Weekly

