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The Battle Cry

May 2002

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



President's Message

Wow! Won't Dan Defoe be a tough act to follow? I claim no background as a judge of forensics, but in terms of voice modulation, listener attentiveness, enjoyment, etc., we experienced one of the best! Reconstruction did in fact come alive and we all enjoyed and learned from the evening. Thank you!

The Gibson Ranch show came off as scheduled and your Round Table participation was significant. Ten volunteers were on hand at 8:30 on Friday morning to escort student groups— join me in saying a big thanks to Walt Bittle, Fred Bohmfalk, Ruth Connally, George Foxworth, Sherran and Al McKim, Jim Middleton, Keith Roberts, and Bob Williams. Our information booth was staffed on Saturday and Sunday by several members and a good time was had by all.

The opportunity to bring items and information to our Wednesday meetings for “Show and Tell” is returning. There will be a designated time for “Show and Tell” on our meeting agenda. On the “show” side, we will have a safe display of your memorabilia after the meeting, but nothing will be circulated during the meeting. On the “tell” side, you would explain the item to be displayed, quickly re-cap a battlefield visit, or share your relevant topic of interest. Whatever is Civil War related and fits into three minutes! Let the fun begin!

Your focus for a moment on the July meeting is required! It will most likely be on Saturday, July 27th, with Generals Grant and Lee. I will know for certain shortly after Memorial Day. If the joint appearance of the generals does not become a reality, we will meet on July 31st (Wednesday), with a different program.

A big thank you to Dudley Albrecht for donating to the SCWRT a twenty volume bound set of the Civil War Times magazine. This set is complete from the mid-sixties to the mid-eighties. Bob Williams is sweetening the pot by adding his collection from the mid-eighties to present. Following the wishes of the Board of Directors, Bob is investigating donating the combined collection to a local college library. Thank you Bob!

The next muster is on Wednesday, May 29th, at the usual time and place. Our own Walt Bittle will provide the excitement by discussing the last days of the Confederate government. The title of his presentation is “The Flight of the Confederate Government!” I can't wait! I'll see you there!

Paul Ruud, President

**SISTER REGIS:
THE FIRST STATUE, 1884**

It's my job to supervise the chapel. Margaret's statue isn't the first ever erected on an American street, but hers is the first ever cast to honor a woman. Margaret touched thousands, and when she died two years ago, thousands marched in her funeral procession. Both her parents died when Margaret was nine, barely a year after they'd arrived in this country; Margaret knew the angels couldn't help her because they'd all gone away. Ten years later, a yellow fever epidemic killed 10,000 people including Margaret's husband and baby. There were hundreds of widows and orphans. Using savings from her job as a washer woman, Margaret built the first orphanage in New Orleans. Ten years later Fever---again---devastated the city and over 11,000 people died. Everywhere, children and babies were scared, hungry and homeless. Margaret baked bread and bought a dairy. She gave free milk and loaves to the destitute and the sick. Margaret also built three more orphanages and a chapel. She spoke with fighting courage, passionate conviction and from a heart that was breaking. In stone, she's seated, smiling, embracing

a child and the raised letters
read---simply---MARGARET
by Kit Knight

**Sacramento Civil War
Round Table Programs 2002**

May 29: "The Flight of the Confederate Government," by Walt Bittle.

June 26: "General George McClellan," by Jim Harper.

July 27 or 31: "Grant-Lee dialogs reenacted," by Jim Marsh and Jay Dolan (date not firm).

August 28: Gettysburg II," by Ray Bisio.

September 25: Two parts: (1) Poetry Reading by Kit Knight. **(2) Short Program**—SCWRT members.

October 30: "Major General Jesse L. Reno," by Paul Ruud.

December 4: Sacramento Civil War Round Table Panel discussing Atlanta Campaign (probably).

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance as of May 15, 2002 is \$1,589.45

When US Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's army crossed the Etowah River on May 23, the Atlanta campaign entered a new phase. Sherman's purpose had been to turn or outflank CS General Joseph E. Johnston's army by threatening the railroad in his rear. Sherman knew from a visit to the area twenty years earlier that Allatoona Pass was very strong. Instead of attacking Johnston there at the pass, where he was guarding the railroad, Sherman surprised the Confederates by leaving his railroad supply line and striking out cross-country south to Marietta via Dallas with more than 85,000 fighting men and twenty' days supplies in his wagons. Sherman's army group advanced in separate columns: US Major General James B. McPherson's Army of the Tennessee in the west near Van Wert, US Major General George H. Thomas's Army of the Cumberland in the center along the main road to Dallas, and US Major General John M. Schofield's Army of the Ohio to the left rear.

US Major General Joseph Hooker's XX Corps of the Army of the Cumberland took the lead. On May 25 his three divisions advanced on roughly parallel roads: US Major General Daniel Butterfield's division on the left, US Brigadier General John W. Geary's in the center and US Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams's on the right. Geary's division encountered Confederate cavalry near Owen's Mill on Pumpkinvine Creek. The lead brigade pushed ahead for three more miles and encountered Confederates who fought a delaying action for about a mile back to CS Lieutenant General John Bell Hood's main line centering on New Hope Church. CS

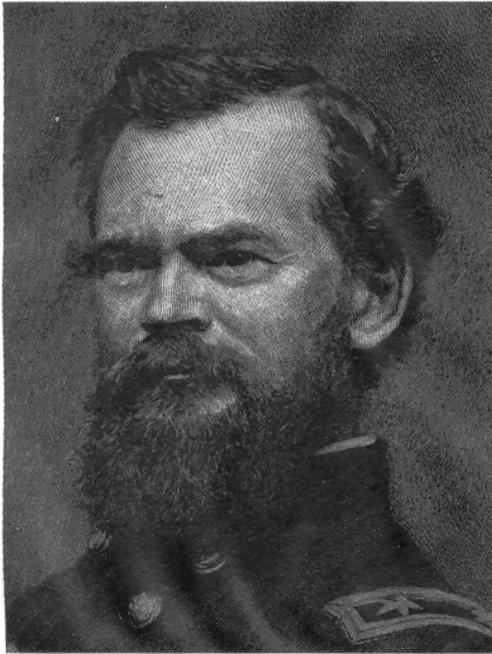
Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk's Corps was not far away in the direction of Dallas. The total Confederate strength was about 70,000. Geary halted on a ridge in the woods, entrenched, and waited for Butterfield and Williams to arrive.

The terrain was crisscrossed by small ravines and covered by dense woods with considerable underbrush, and as Williams's division advanced in three lines, the troops could scarcely see the main Confederate rifle pits. The massed Union formations were exposed to a continuous fire of canister and shrapnel. Hooker's troops were repulsed at all points, although the leading line advanced to within twenty-five or thirty paces of the Confederates defenses before the Confederates forced them to fall back and entrench. The Confederates lost 350 men, while Hooker reported losses of 1,665.

US Major General Oliver O. Howard's IV corps moved into position on Hooker's left during the dark, rainy night, prolonging the line beyond Brown's Mill. The next morning the leading division of US Major General John M. Palmer's XIV Corps arrived and entrenched on Hooker's right. On May 26 Schofield's army came up to extend Howard's line to the left. To meet this threat, Hood moved CS Major General Thomas C. Hindman's Division to the right of his line. For four days the fighting in the area near New Hope Church was incessant. Visibility was poor in the dense woods, and the lines were so close that the troops were constantly under fire. The Confederates had the advantage of position, being entrenched on higher

ground. Sherman's superior artillery and ability to maneuver were generally negated by the terrain....

At first Sherman assumed that only Hood's Corps was in his



Maj General James B. McPherson

front. He ordered McPherson to move into Dallas, link up with US Brigadier General Jefferson C. Davis's division of Palmer's XIV Corps, and then advance toward New Hope Church to hit Hood's left flank. On May 26 US Major General John A. Logan's XV Corps moved south through Dallas on the Powder Springs Road and ran into CS Lieutenant General William J. Hardee's Corps behind strong fieldworks that extended across the Powder Springs and Marietta Roads. McPherson's men threw up a line of works during the night. The next day, May 27, Sherman ordered McPherson to close in toward Hooker. McPherson would then be able to move his army to the left around Johnston's right flank and place it between the Confederates and the railroad.

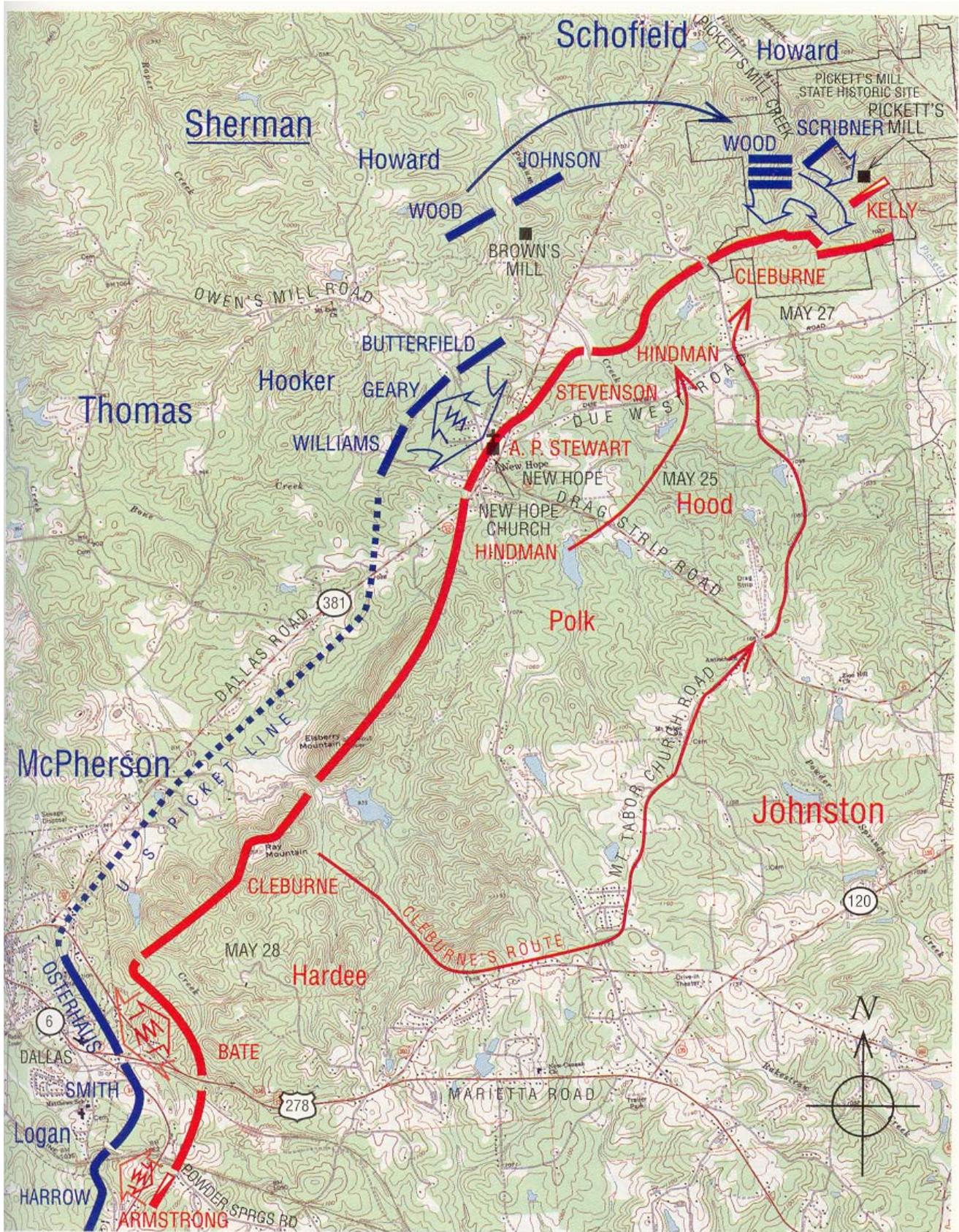
On May 27 Howard led 14,000 Federals to the Union left to attack the

Confederates on Hood's right, initiating the battle of Pickett's Mill. This was the bloodiest thus far in the campaign. After struggling through dense forests and deep ravines and over difficult ridges, US Brigadier General Thomas J. Wood's division of Howard's Corps attacked the Confederate right flank at 4:30PM. However, CS Major General Patrick R. Cleburne's Division had been detached from Hardee's Corps and sent into position on Hood's right, and had just extended the line to Pickett's Mill. The next fifty minutes were terrible for US Brigadier General William B. Hazen's brigade, which began the assault. Everything went wrong....

The fighting lasted well into the night, but the Confederate flank held firm. The Union troops withdrew in the dark and entrenched on a ridge farther to the north. Wood's division alone suffered about 1,400 casualties ...

The final battle in the area was at Dallas on May 28. Because of faulty communications, CS Major General William B Bate's Division, on the left of Hardee's Corps, mistakenly stormed out of its trenches late in the afternoon to assault McPherson's force in his front.... The Union troops held, and in about two hours Bate's men fell back,... On June 1 all three Union armies slid a few miles to the left. By June 4 Union cavalry occupied Allatoona Pass. With the great railroad bridge over the Etowah rebuilt, Sherman could sidestep Johnston, link up with the railroad, and push on toward Marietta and the Chattahoochee.

By Jay Luvaas in *The Civil War Battlefield Guide* pages 332-334



NEW HOPE CHURCH, PICKETT'S MILL AND DALLAS

25 - 28 May 1864

Combat Strength
85,000-100,000
70,000

Casualties
2,645
1,800 - 2,300

Scale in Feet
0 4000



Plate No. 150 The Giant Majority Carrying Abe Lincoln Safely Through Troubled Waters to the White House, Poster Cartoon by Frank Bellow, November, 1864

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2002
 Sudwerk Restaurant, 1375 Exposition Boulevard, Sacramento

Attendance – 39

Members – 33

Paul Ruud, President
 Kit Knight, Vice President
 George Foxworth, Treasurer
 Walt Bittle, Secretary
 Dudley Albrecht
 Jim Armstrong
 Mark Aulman
 Mary Aulman
 George Beitzel
 Roy Bishop
 Fred Bohmfalk

Bernie Buenrostro
 Ardith Cnota
 Mitch Cnota
 Mike Dobbins
 Bill Donaldson
 Lydia Donaldson
 Alan Geiken
 Donald Hayden
 Russ Knauer
 Arthur Knight
 Dennis Kohlmann

Gatha Lee
 Ken Lentz
 Mary Lou Lentz
 Al McKim
 Jim Middleton
 Betty Mitchell
 Maurice Mitchell
 Keith Roberts
 Natalie Schafer
 Rudy Schafer
 Bob Williams

Guests – 6

Daniel Defoe
 Karin Defoe
 Connie Gipson
 Mary Muttera
 Bud Schmiedel
 Ramona Schmiedel

1. The meeting was called to order by President Ruud, who reviewed This Day in Civil War History. New members and guests were introduced and welcomed. The March minutes were approved as printed.
2. Program – Daniel Defoe, Professor of History at Sierra College, presented a dynamic talk titled “Reconstruction – The Revolution That Went Backward”. Mr. Defoe exhibited the wit of a veteran teacher and the zeal of a dedicated historian in covering his subject. The members were very impressed with his grasp of the facts, as well as his unique ability to make those facts come alive for his audience. Our sincere thanks to Mr. Defoe, and we certainly hope he will bring us another presentation.
3. Activity Reports
 - a. President Ruud reviewed our participation in the Gibson Ranch reenactment. We will be serving as docents for students on Friday, and our booth will be manned all day Saturday and Sunday.
 - b. Members were reminded that “Show and Tell” is always an option at any meeting, should anyone desire the opportunity.
 - c. Members were encouraged to attend the West Coast Civil War Conference in Fresno, October 8 to 10, 2002.
 - d. Carol Breiter announced plans to tour the USS Hornet in Alameda on May 25.
 - e. Walt Bittle distributed a questionnaire about Civil War ancestors prepared by budding author Joshua Weinberg of Las Vegas.
 - f. The schedule for upcoming programs and meetings was reviewed.
4. Adjournment – The raffle was postponed to the May meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Walt Bittle
 Secretary

Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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 Sacramento, CA 95865-4702

Gibson Ranch Reenactment

The West Coast's premier spring reenactment happened at Sacramento's Gibson Ranch County Park on the last weekend in April. Sponsored by the National Civil War Association (NCWA), Sacramento County Parks and the Rio Linda-Elverta Historical Society, this is the fastest growing event in the West. Those who have attended before agree that it's also one of the best.

Gibson Ranch offers excellent terrain for the public and participant alike. The battlefield looks for all the world like a farm in Northern Virginia or Maryland and comes complete with a stream running down the center. The topography also offers the public a "grassy grandstand" – a lush slope that assures everyone a great view of the entire field. To compliment this setting, the event offered up the presence of numerous historical characters.

The park has two stages that served as platforms for speeches and personal interaction sessions by Robert E. Lee, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Stonewall Jackson, Clara Barton, as well as musicians. The Battlefield Stage will also hosted the narrator for a horse drawn artillery demonstration courtesy of the NCWA's Artillery Reserve, Army of the Potomac.

Dancing in the Street

On Saturday, the Main Stage offered up musicians who played for reenactors doing the Virginia Reel up and down the street. After the first time through, all of the reenactors dispersed into the crowd and brought back a partner. The public loved being "a part of," and the reenactors had a great time as well.

A game of rounders (baseball) was also in the offering. Rounders has become a bit of a Gibson Ranch tradition and the public seems to enjoy the game every bit as much as the players do.

The NCWA and Gibson Ranch also presented a school program for 2,300 5th and 8th graders the Friday before the event. This was a "kids only day" and the largest program of its kind (that I know of) in the United States.

The large numbers might at first beguile the fact that this is a "quality first" (as opposed to quantity) program. This program has consistently drawn rave reviews from teachers as well as students. Yet in spite of the large number of children the program accommodates, there will still be nearly one thousand kids left on the waiting list.

So how does this program work? When a "regiment" of children arrives, they are broken down into three wings – one wing going to each three identical circle of presentation stations. Each wing then forms "companies" of about 42 kids each. From this point, the companies rotate through the stations. The stations include artillery, infantry, civilians, sharpshooters and cavalry, medical and generals. The companies rotate when the cannon at each of the artillery stations fires. The artillery stations are in communication via radio and help keep the program running like clockwork. The rest of the clockwork precision comes from hard working docents from the Sacramento Civil War Round Table and the Rio Linda-Elverta Historical Society. These volunteers assume the role of company first sergeants, moving their "troops" in a timely manner.

It's a tough schedule for presenters and docents alike, but the rewards are well worth the effort. There is no way to describe the feeling; the satisfactions when you see children light up with an awareness that you have helped provide. For these kids, history – their history has just moved out some dull, dim textbook and into the brilliant light of day. They have seen it, heard it, smelled it. History has just become real and with that comes the excitement that we ourselves feel. We have just connected with the next generation of reenactors.