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October 2001

2001 SCWRT Officers:

Paul Ruud, President
 (530) 886-8806
pruud1@quiknet.com

Ardith Cnota, Vice-President
 (916) 422-9667
mmc2100@att.net

Walt Bittle, Secretary
 (916) 722-2552
waltb50@aol.com

George Foxworth, Treasurer
 (916) 362-0178

Mitch Cnota,
 Member-at-Large
 (916) 422-9667
mmc2100@att.net

Jim Middleton,
 Member-at-Large
 (916) 363-8112
jim@ns.net

Bernardo Buenrostro
 Acting Newsletter Editor &
 Webmaster, (916) 362-9837
bernxbb@ix.netcom.com

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The Battle Cry

October 2001

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



President's Message:

The railroads, as subjects of conversation if not track, converged on SCWRT and the Sudwerk last Wednesday night. A special thank you to Lee Meredith for telling us about strategic aspects of railroads during the Civil War. What a story! Especially, the portion where units of both armies were moved, with great difficulty, by railroad, from the Eastern Front where they were facing each other to the Western Front in Tennessee to face each other again. Thanks to Bob and Anne Rohwer and Len Kennedy from the Sacramento Railroad Museum for spending the evening with us.

Remember that we will be electing officers for 2002 at our next meeting. The nominating committee has produced an excellent slate of candidates for your consideration. Should you have other candidates to nominate, you may do so from the floor before the election. Should you have a nomination, please check with the person to be nominated beforehand to confirm willingness and availability to serve.

The 2001 version of the West Coast Civil War Conference will be happening on the weekend of November 9, 10, and 11th. The theme is the Maryland Campaign of 1862 – Harpers Ferry, South Mountain, and Antietam. One of my favorites, Union Major General Jesse L. Reno, fell at South Mountain.

The Round Table now has a post office box – the address: Sacramento CWRT, P.O. Box 254702, Sacramento, CA 95865-4702. You are encouraged to direct Round Table correspondence to that address.

Remember that shirts and jackets emblazoned with the SCWRT logo may be purchased at Nor Cal Embroidery and Specialties, 4208 Douglas Blvd, Ste 100, Granite Bay, CA 95746. If you need more information, contact George Foxworth.

Circle Wednesday, October 24th on your calendar for the next encampment at the Sudwerk Grill and Brewery. I encourage everyone to bring your spouse, significant other, neighbors, and friends (I think you get the picture) since this evening will be memorable. We will also be joined by several members of the Elk Grove Civil War Round Table. The program will be very special – Jim Stanbery will be making a return engagement after his successes at our Shiloh Conference to thrill us with his presentation entitled, **“Should the other fellow have gotten the job?”** We will have a cake and coffee reception for Jim in the regular Sudwerk room immediately following the meeting. Plan to stay a few minutes to visit and talk Civil War with your fellow members.

Sincerely,

Paul Ruud

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2001
 Sudwerk Restaurant, 1375 Exposition Boulevard, Sacramento

ATTENDANCE – 32

MEMBERS – 24

Paul Ruud, President
 Ardith Cnota, Vice President
 George Foxworth, Treasurer
 Walt Bittle, Secretary
 Dudley Albrecht
 Jim Armstrong
 Roy Bishop
 Fred Bohmfalk

Carol Breiter
 Bernie Buenrostro
 Mike Dobbins
 Bill Donaldson
 Lydia Donaldson
 Ken Kitchen
 Russ Knauer
 Kit Knight

Dennis Kohlmann
 Al McKim
 Jim Middleton
 Maurice Mitchell
 Keith Roberts
 David Wilkening
 Clayton Williams
 John Zasso

GUESTS – 8

Ted Hansen
 Len Kennedy
 Lee Meredith
 Bob Rohwer
 Ted Savas
 Larry Spizzirri
 Richard Spizzirri
 Roxanne Spizzirri

1. The meeting was called to order by President Ruud, who asked for a moment of silence to remember the recent mass murder in New York and Washington. He then reviewed the historical events of September 11, 1861. Guests were introduced and welcomed.
2. Program – Lee Meredith, of the South Bay CWRT, presented an excellent talk on the “Strategic Aspects of Railroads in the Civil War”. Mr. Meredith reviewed the development of railroads in the United States and outlined the situation at the beginning and throughout the Civil War. The members were very impressed with his research, his depth of knowledge, and his presentation. His hand-colored maps were most helpful to the understanding of troop movements. Thanks, Lee, for a very informative evening.
3. Committee/Activity Reports
 - a. The August minutes were approved as printed. Treasurer Foxworth reported a balance of \$1389.63, of which \$53 was raised by the raffle.
 - b. President Ruud commended Ardith and Mitch Cnota for donating the period flags and Jim Middleton for donating the poles and display stands.
 - c. Mitch Cnota and Fred Bohmfalk, serving as the Nominating Committee, presented a slate of officers for consideration at the October meeting.
 - d. Dudley Albrecht commented on *Band of Brothers, Gods and Generals, Cold Mountain*, and especially recommended *Gangs of New York*.
 - e. George Foxworth reminded members that our logo is available at NorCal Embroidery in Roseville (take your clothing or buy theirs).
 - f. Lee Meredith volunteered to lead a group (up to 12) through the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* stationed in Alameda. Lee serves as a docent there.
4. Adjournment – President Ruud reviewed upcoming meetings and activities. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30, followed by the raffle.

Walt Bittle
 Secretary

**Sacramento Civil War Round Table
Meeting Agenda
October 24, 2001**

1. Call to Order

- X This day during the Civil War
- X Introduction of guests and new members

2. Program - Should the other fellow have gotten the job?" by Jim Stanbery

3. Reports

- X Approval of minutes
- X President
- X Treasurer - George Foxworth
- X Others

4. Election of Officers for the Year, 2002

5. Upcoming meetings:

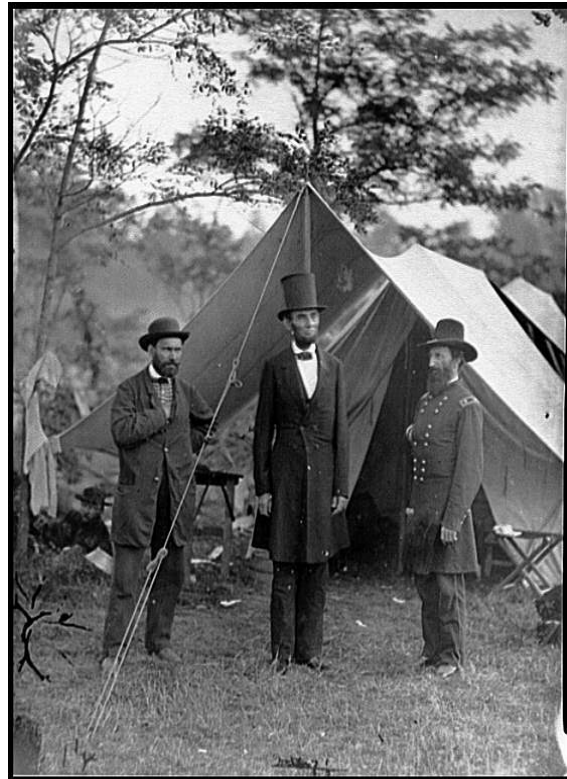
- X Next regular meeting: November 28, 2001, here at Sudwerk - program **Twenty-seven Days of Terror by Ted Savas.**
- X Next board meeting: Wednesday, **November 14 @ 1130 hrs**, Carrows at 28th and J Streets in Sacramento members are encouraged to attend.
- X Saturday breakfast: **November 17 @ 9:30 AM**, location will be available from Bernie Buenrostro.

6. Raffle - John Zasso

The meeting will be followed by a

Reception for Jim Stanbery – cake and coffee

Don't forget the Annual West Coast Conference "Confederate Tide Rising: The 1862 Maryland Campaign" Harpers Ferry, South Mountain, and Antietam on November 9, 10, & 11, 2001 at the Radisson Resort Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, CA. It should be fascinating.



Allan Pinkerton, Abraham Lincoln and Major General John A. McClernand at Antietam MD

Have you ever wondered how the Confederacy dealt with the **Pledge of Allegiance** with the phrase ...one nation, indivisible,...when they did not accept its indivisibility? The Pledge originated as part of a quadricentennial Columbus Day celebration in 1892 given by public schools, so it wasn't around during the Civil War.

This review by Professor James McPherson is from the Sunday, 9.30.01 NY Times "Book Review" September 30, 2001

'The Reel Civil War': Klieg Lights and Magnolias By JAMES M. MCPHERSON

THE REEL CIVIL WAR Mythmaking in American Film.

By Bruce Chadwick. Illustrated. 366 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$27.50.

In learning history, nothing beats a good Hollywood film." So stated the classroom study guide to the Civil War movie "Shenandoah," made in 1965. Although the film told the story of a family in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, it was shot in Oregon, to the outrage of many Virginians. When challenged about this location, the director declared. "There is no place that looks more like Virginia than Oregon."

For Bruce Chadwick, this comment is a metaphor for the accuracy of most of the 800 Civil War-era movies made since 1903: they bear as much resemblance to historical reality as Oregon does to Virginia. Over 600 of these films date from the silent era, mainly 1908-16, the years surrounding the 50th-anniversary commemorations of the war. With few exceptions these were short one-or-two-reelers. The big exception was "The Birth of a Nation," a technical and artistic breakthrough that confirmed D. W. Griffith's reputation as one of the greatest directors of all time.

In "The Reel Civil War," Chadwick, a lecturer on history and film at Rutgers, analyzes Hollywood's treatment of the Civil War at length. He makes a strong case for "The Birth of a Nation" as the quintessential example of how movies perpetuated myths about the conflict until at least the 1960's: showing a moonlight-and-magnolia South of white-columned mansions, beautiful women, gentle men and happy slaves that was destroyed by a war in which Southern whites lost all save honor but struggled heroically to overcome postwar despoliation by carpetbaggers and their ignorant black pawns. A generation later, "Gone With the Wind" became the second great example of Hollywood's romanticized version of the South.

Most Civil War movies, Chadwick tells us, presented the South as the underdog, doomed to defeat by the greater numbers and resources of the indus-

trial North, but making an honorable fight. Often the Confederacy appears as a victim, with the implication that the North was the aggressor. The historical reality, that Confederates started the war by firing on Fort Sumter, is almost never suggested.

The principal theme of many of these films is the postwar reconciliation between Northern and Southern whites, frequently sealed by a marriage between a bride and groom who were on opposite sides during the war. Or, in keeping with the "brothers' war" theme of numerous movies, two brothers (or a father and son) are reconciled and become part of one big happy family again. These films represent both sides as fighting courageously for what they believed was right. That the Confederacy fought for slavery and the destruction of the United States as one nation, cannot be mentioned, for that would hinder reconciliation and reunion.

When slaves appear in these movies, they are either happy-go-lucky Sambos or obese Mammies, while freedmen are vicious savages or doltish dupes. "The Birth of a Nation" was the worst offender in this regard. Its portrayal of the Reconstruction Ku Klux Klan as white knights who saved the South from black beasts inspired the founding of the second Klan, a powerful force for intolerance in the 1920's.

"The Birth of a Nation" was one of the greatest box-office successes of all time, seen by 200 million people in the United States and abroad from 1915 to 1946. Chadwick scarcely exaggerates in describing it as "a blatantly racist film that egregiously slandered American blacks and helped to create a racial divide that would last for generations."

And, he adds, "the fingerprints of 'Birth of a Nation' were all over 'Gone With the Wind.'" In Atlanta a schoolgirl saw Griffith's film a dozen times and staged her own neighborhood play based on it; her name was Margaret Mitchell. Chadwick's fascinating account of the making of her novel into a movie shows that most scenes of a noble Klan and vicious free blacks were left on the cutting-room floor by the producer, David O. Selznick. But the other stereotypes of the plantation myth, kind masters, happy slaves and victimized South, remained in the film, and remain to this day in the minds of many whites as dominant images of the Old South and the Civil War.

One-third of "The Reel Civil War" concentrates

on these two movies. Given their prominence, that seems a reasonable balance, and Chadwick's dissection of the myths they helped to foster is superb. His chapters on the early silent films and on movies about Abraham Lincoln are also outstanding. But his thesis that many films depicting Lincoln contained a subtle Pro-Southern bias, because Lincoln "was the single greatest catalyst in reunion movies," seems a bit forced.

The book's final chapters on the decades since "Gone With the Wind" tend to lose focus. Television shows and miniseries receive as much attention as movies, sometimes more. Even a 1999 Broadway musical, "The Civil War," gets greater space than, for example, a genuine Civil War movie like "Friendly Persuasion," which Chadwick describes as "one of the finest films of the period" but then virtually ignores. Other post-World War II films, like "The Horse Soldiers," are discussed in only a few sentences. One of the finest films, "Red Badge of Courage," receives but two paragraphs, while "Roots," which was neither a movie nor primarily about the Civil War, gets a whole chapter. To be sure, "Roots" helped overturn the victimized-South myth, and Chadwick implies that it paved the road to "Glory," which does receive extensive treatment. One suspects, however, that "Glory" would have been made even if the "Roots" phenomenon had never occurred.

Chadwick has also allowed his thesis about the Pro-Southern bias of Civil War films to lead him into a few distortions of his own. Michael Shaara's novel "The Killer Angels," on which the movie "Gettysburg" was based, was not "written from the Southern point of view." And the famous scene of Atlanta burning in "Gone With the Wind" was the result of Confederates setting fire to everything of military value when they evacuated the city, not a consequence of Yankee arson -- a mistake that Chadwick shares with perhaps 99 out of 100 viewers. Still, the reader should not let these and a few other minor errors, or the bad pun of the book's title, detract from the genuine virtues of this enlightening volume.

Honor's Voice - The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln by Douglas L. Wilson-1998

This book is a fascinating study of what it takes to sift through the little-known "facts" about a person's life. Focusing on the crucial years between 1831 and 1842, Wilson's skillful analysis reveals the individual behind the legends. What you learn about "Honest Abe" may surprise you.

Mr. Wilson studied the interviews of Lincoln's acquaintances and alleged friends (most recorded long after his death) in minute and meticulous detail, comparing various versions of an event with others. He then compared those possibly faulty "memories" and came up with a reasoned estimate of the probable "truth". ("Truth", of course, being relative.)

Is he right? We'll never know! But he does lay out an effective strategy for other biographers. (Book Review by Walt Bittle)

I often order books from Daedalus Books because they have some terrific prices—probably books that didn't sell well in stores. [www.salebooks.com — they will send you a catalog, and you can order by mail or online.]

I really got a dud this time: *Gunfire Around The Gulf* by Jack D. Coombe. I was only nine pages into the narrative when I realized why his use of "up" and "down" rivers was so confusing—and I am paraphrasing: "...Foote took his gunboats down the Tennessee River to Fort Henry ...the fleet went up-river to the Ohio and back down the Cumberland to Fort Donelson..."(The Ohio River is "up" on a map; the Tennessee and Cumberland flow downriver to the North.) Then on page eleven, he moved Port Hudson from Louisiana to twenty-five miles north of Vicksburg, Mississippi. When I read on page 39 that H. L. Hunley himself had died in the *Housatonic* attack, I was ready to throw the book away. I finished it, but I didn't believe much of what he said — so I didn't learn much. Take my advice and avoid this book at all costs. (Do these kinds of errors occur in his *Thunder Along The Mississippi?*) (Walt Bittle)

Civil War Skirmish Association

<http://www.calweb.com/~arline/Events.html>

Date	Event	Hosted By	Location
November 10-11	Regional Skirmish	2 nd Texas & F. Troop	Camp Sixbits
December 2001	Range Clean-Up		

American Civil War Association Schedule

[Http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/acwa/sched.html](http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/acwa/sched.html)

Date	Location	Description
November	Sonora, CA	Winter Ball

Reenactors of the American Civil War

[Http://www.home.inreach.com/mavgw/racwschedule.htm](http://www.home.inreach.com/mavgw/racwschedule.htm)

Date	Event	Location
November, 2001	RACW Harvest Ball	To Be Announced

National Civil War Association

<http://www.ncwa.org>

Date	Event	Location
November 3-4	Reenactment	Vacaville, Lagoon Valley Park

THE BURNING OF CHAMBERSBURG .

The final Confederate outrage visited upon the people, black and white, of Franklin County occurred on July 30, 1864. On that date Jenkins' cavalry returned, now under the command of Brigadier General John McCausland. Their mission was to levy a tribute on Chambersburg or burn it to the ground in retaliation for the destruction by General Hunter of the homes of three prominent West Virginia secessionists. The townfolk were unable to meet the ransom demand of \$500,000 in greenbacks or \$100,000 in gold, and the place was torched. More than 500 structures were burned and the core of the town was destroyed. Discipline broke down, as many Confederates got drunk, robbed and looted. One citizen, a black man, was killed when Confederates repeatedly pushed him back into his burning dwelling; overcome with smoke, he suffered a heart attack and died. (North & South September 2001 Vol. 4 Number 7 page 88)

Help Veterans

You can help vets and perhaps yourself by registering with the Veterans Administration. The more vets that sign up the easier it is for them to get funding. You don't have to have a medical condition to qualify although if you develop one you may be able to have medical treatment there. To sign up take your DD-214 to Mather Hospital and tell them you wish to register.

SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Join Today

Founded in 1961, the Sacramento Civil War Round Table (SCWRT) offers a forum for programs and discussions on the American Civil War. Chartered during the Civil War Centennial, SCWRT is one of the oldest Round Tables in the United States.

The Sacramento Civil War Round Table meets at 6:00PM for a No-Host dinner/social hour on the last Wednesday of each month except December. The meetings are held at the Sudwerk Grill and Brewery, which is located at the intersection of Exposition Blvd. and Response Way. The membership includes teachers, students, amateur and professional military historians; collectors, genealogists, living history re-enactors and persons who wish to increase their knowledge of that time period. Membership in the SCWRT is open to anyone who is interested in the War or aspects of military history. Members receive **The Battle Cry**, the SCWRT monthly newsletter. The Round Table's web site provides current information at <http://www.sacramentocwrt.com/>

Dues are \$20.00 per year for an individual or family membership. Dues are payable at any regular meeting by cash or check and are prorated for new members. If you are interested in the Round Table, please complete the application below and either mail the form and money to George Foxworth or bring it to a monthly meeting.

For more information:

Paul Ruud-President	530-886-8806	pruud@quiknet.com
Ardith Cnota-Vice President	916-422-9667	mmc2100@att.net
George Foxworth-Treasurer	916-362-0178	none
Walt Bittle-Secretary	916-722-2552	waltb50@aol.com
Bernie Buenrostro-Webmaster	916-362-9837	bernxbb@ix.netcom.com

Enrollment Application Sacramento Civil War Round Table

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail _____

Special Civil War Interests: _____

Enclose a check for \$20 made payable to SCWRT. Mail to George Foxworth, SCWRT, 9463 Salishan Crt., Sacramento, CA 95826-5233.

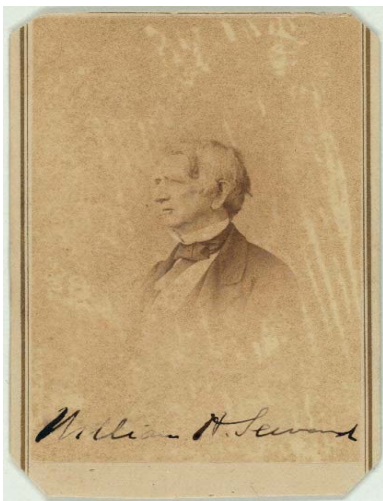
The Battle Cry Editor—This publication is a monthly newsletter (except December) of the Sacramento CWRT. Please submit items to me for publication by the 12th of each month at the address listed below. I can receive submissions over the phone at: (916) 362-9837 or through e-mail: bernxbb@ix.netcom.com Check web site <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org/> for past newsletter editions.

Bernardo Buenrostro, Editor, "The Battle Cry"

JONNY 'N BILLY



Sacramento Civil War Round Table
P.O. Box 254702
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702



William Seward