



The Battle Cry

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



**Volume 42, No. 10
October 2002**

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President's Message:

Our president, Paul Ruud, was away, so the September meeting was conducted by our vice-president, Kit Knight. She also introduced the two speakers for the evening. It was our first meeting at The Doubletree Hotel. We met in one of the basement conference rooms. Walt Bittle, our secretary, had left notes on the door to Sudwerks informing any member of SCWRT that our meeting place had been changed. And Andrew Sneeringer posted large signs in the lobby of The Doubletree informing late arriving members exactly what room we were in. Our thanks to both Walt and Andrew. Our thanks also to Carol Breiter for securing us the conference room in The Doubletree. She told us that she'd promised The Doubletree that at least ten of us would have dinner before the meeting and "how very glad" she was that 12 of us ordered.

Kit introduced herself as the first speaker. She gave a 20 minute poetry reading. She has had more than 800 poems published and is a regular contributor to The Battle Cry.

Kit has long been fascinated with women who lived and grieved through The War Between the States. The divided loyalties of families. A mother would watch one son march north and another go south, and she would grieve both deaths. Kit's poems take on the 'voice' of the individual woman and tells her story. *Persona poems*. Sometimes her poems talk to each other. She read poems in the voices of Rachael Cooke, whose husband remained loyal to the Union, and Flora Stuart, who was the wife of Jeb Stuart.

Often, Kit focuses on unknown women. We got the story of the girl who fell in love with John Wilkes Booth and the story of his mother, Mary Ann. Who ever thinks of how his mother was affected? Who even thinks of Booth's mother?

The second speaker Kit introduced was Russell Knauer. He spoke for 20 minutes on the natural fortifications that surrounded Vicksburg and why it was so difficult for Union troops to take that "Gibraltar of the

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South." The sloping sides of the east bank were carved by a glacier 20,000 years ago. Commander David Porter of the U.S. Navy said in 1862, "Ships cannot crawl up hills 300 feet high." Jefferson Davis considered "Vicksburg to be the nailhead that held the South's two halves together."

SCWRT thanks both speakers.

At our October meeting (the 30th at 7 at The Doubletree) we are going to elect our officers for the next year. Dan Defoe will be giving us another passionate talk on the images of slavery.

I look forward to seeing you at The Doubletree. Come early and have dinner; Carol will be watching.

Kit Knight, acting president

**October 30, 2002 meeting will be at the Doubletree Hotel
Across from Arden Fair Mall
2001 Point West Way
(916) 929-8855**

When you enter the hotel look for notices of what room we are using. Come and enjoy dinner and conversation in the dining room. Ask the waitress where the Round Table is sitting.

ALERT

The 18th Annual West Coast Conference has moved from the Fresno Plaza Hotel to the Ramada Inn (559) 224-4040

Programs for the Rest of the Year

October 30th "Images of Slavery" by Dan Defoe

December 4th Discussion of "Atlanta Campaign" by Fred Bohmfalk, Russell Knauer, Dennis Kohlmann, & Bob Williams with Walt Bittle as moderator

Battle Cry Editor

This publication is a monthly newsletter (except December) of the Sacramento CWRT. Please submit items to me for publication no later than the meeting day of the Board of Directors, (next meeting November 13th 2002) either at that meeting, my home address (on first page), or by e-mail. <BattleCryEditor@aol.com>

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, September 25, 2002
DoubleTree Hotel, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento

ATTENDANCE – 22

MEMBERS – 20

Kit Knight, Vice President
George Foxworth, Treasurer
Walt Bittle, Secretary
Dudley Albrecht
Roy Bishop
Carol Breiter
Steve Breiter

Alan Geiken
Jim Harper
Don Hayden
Janet Junell
Robert Junell
Marjorie Knauer
Russ Knauer

Arthur Knight
Jim Middleton
Betty Mitchell
Maurice Mitchell
Andrew Sneeringer
Bob Williams

GUESTS – 2

Mark Hayden
Jim Lane

1. The meeting was called to order by Vice President Kit Knight, who reviewed this day in Civil War history. New members and guests were introduced and welcomed. The minutes of August 28 were approved as printed, with the exception of moving Brad Schall from guest to member.
2. Program
 - a. Kit Knight presented a short program by reading her original poetry. Each of the poems was inspired by, and included, a real person from history. Kit provided a background for each of her poems, thus bringing that person to life and making that time more personal.
 - b. Russ Knauer stepped in to take us back through unrecorded time to when the high ground on the east bank of the Mississippi was laid down. Russ showed us how the highlands were formed – and when – and why. This geological knowledge helps immensely in understanding the problems encountered by the Union in attempting to push the Confederates off those heights. (When were the fortifications begun for the city of Vicksburg? 20,000 years ago!)
3. Committee/Activity Reports
 - a. Kit Knight read the slate of officers presented by the Nominations Committee. There were no nominations from the floor. New officers will be elected at the meeting of October 30. (The slate of officers will be printed elsewhere in the *Battle Cry*.)
 - b. Carol Breiter reviewed the process that brought us to the DoubleTree Hotel from the now-defunct Sudwerk. The Board had already reserved the VFW Hall for the meeting, but Carol was able to negotiate a meeting room at the hotel. Then, after a map was mailed out, the hotel changed the meeting location. With any luck, the hotel will get its act together so we can assess the pros and cons about this location. Thanks Carol, your efforts are appreciated!
 - c. Members were reminded about upcoming programs and the Fresno conference.
4. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8:25, there being no raffle this evening.

Walt Bittle
Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance as of September 25, 2002 was \$1,465.48. There was no raffle in September, but the August raffle brought in \$72. George Foxworth, Treasurer

True Hallowed Ground

By George F. Will

Sunday, September 22, 2002; Page B07

"Why did we run? Well, those who didn't run are there yet."

-- an Ohio soldier

CHANCELLORSVILLE, Va. -- The 12-mile march on May 2, 1863, took Stonewall Jackson from the clearing in the woods where he conferred for the last time with Robert E. Lee to a spot from which Jackson and 30,000 troops surveyed the rear of the Union forces. Those forces, commanded by a blowhard, Joe Hooker ("May God have mercy on General Lee, for I shall have none"), were about to experience one of the nastiest shocks of the Civil War.

Two hours before dusk, Federal soldiers were elated when deer, turkeys and rabbits came pelting out of the woods into their lines. It was not dinner but death approaching. By nightfall Federal forces were scattered. When the fighting subsided four days later, Lee was emboldened to try to win the war with an invasion of Pennsylvania. The invasion's high-water mark came at the crossroads town of Gettysburg.

One hundred and thirty-nine years after the battle here, a more protracted struggle is underway. In 1863 the nation's survival was at stake. Today, only the nation's memory is at stake. "Only"? Without memory, the reservoir of reverence, what of the nation survives?

Hence the urgency of the people opposing a proposal to build, on acreage

over which the struggle surged, 2,350 houses and 2.4 million square feet of commercial and office space. All this would bring a huge increase in traffic, wider highways and the further submergence of irrecoverable history into a perpetually churned present.

Northern Virginia, beginning about halfway between Richmond and Washington, is a humming marvel of energy and entrepreneurship, an urbanizing swirl of commerce and technology utterly unlike the static rural society favored by Virginia's favorite social philosopher, Thomas Jefferson. Chancellorsville is in an east-west rectangle of terrain about 15 miles long and 10 miles wide, now divided by Interstate 95, that saw four great battles - - Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Spotsylvania and the Wilderness -- involving 100,000 killed, wounded or missing.

Where a slavocracy once existed, Northern dynamism prevails. But Northern Virginia has ample acreage for development without erasing the landscapes where the Army of Northern Virginia spent its valor. As for the Federals' side, it is a scandal that the federal government's cheese-paring parsimony has prevented the purchase of historically significant land -- 20,000 acres, maximum -- at Civil War battlefields from Maryland to Mississippi.

Just \$10 million annually for a decade -- a rounding error for many Washington bureaucracies -- would preserve much important battlefield land still outside National Park Service boundaries. The government's neglect can be only

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partially rectified by the private work of the Civil War Preservation Trust, just three years old.

(You can enlist at <http://www.civilwar.org/>. Also check <http://www.chancellorsville.org/>.)

CWPT's president, James Lighthizer, a temperate, grown-up realist, stresses that CWPT's members are "not whacked-out tree-huggers" who hate development and want to preserve "every piece of ground where Lee's horse pooped." But regarding commemorations, Americans today seem inclined to build where they ought not, and to not build where they should, as at the site of the World Trade Center.

In New York City, many people who are anti-growth commerce-despisers want to exploit Ground Zero for grinding their old ideological axes. They favor making all or most of the 16-acre parcel a cemetery without remains, a place of perpetual mourning -- what Richard Brookhiser disapprovingly calls a "deathopolis" in the midst of urban striving.

But most who died at Ground Zero were going about their private pursuits of happiness, murdered by people who detest that American striving. The murderers crashed planes into the twin towers, Brookhiser says, "in the same spirit in which a brat kicks a beehive. They will be stung, and the bees will repair the hive."

Let the site have new towers, teeming with renewed striving.

But a battlefield is different. A battlefield is hallowed ground because

those who there gave the last full measure of devotion went there because they were devoted unto death to certain things.

Those who clashed at Chancellorsville did so in a war that arose from a clash of large ideas. Some ideas were noble, some were not. But there is ample and stirring evidence that many of the young men caught in the war's whirlwind could articulate what the fight was about, on both sides. See James M. McPherson's "For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War."

Local government here can stop misplaced development from trampling out the contours of the Confederacy's greatest victory. A Jeffersonian solution.

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WEB SITES

Reenactors of the American Civil War <http://www.racw.org/>

Civil War Skirmish Association <http://www.calweb.com/~arline/>

American Civil War Assoc. <http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/acwa/>

National Civil War Association <http://ncwa.org/>

Check the web site <http://www.sacramentocwrt.org/> or past newsletter editions.

The official address of this organization is: Sacramento Civil War Round Table P.O. Box 254702 Sacramento, CA 95865-4702.

Where is that Davie McGill?
They used to say, whenever they passed by,
a void they noticed in the neighborhood eye.

Where is that Davie McGill? When will he be back?
I don't think he will; He's traded his pen for a gun and a pack.
Joined McChesney they say; and donned the 10th Zouave gear.
For a meager pay, and without his mother Mary dear!
Such a fine lad, they would say.
I hope he returns some day.
But a change did occur, and he became a proud man;
A National Zouave, in costume and stance,
he stood very tall in those red fighting pants.
With honor and courage, he fought for the corps.
Not ever discouraged, in the bloody Great War.
At second Bull Run, they didn't run or yield,
and refused to abandon the boys dead on the field.
Fighting with the Red 5th, they added to the toll,
of good New York Boys who washed blood on the soil.

On to the Seven Day's, then in foggy cold places, called
Fredericksburg, the scene of repeated Union disgraces.
They charged the wall and there they would fall.
Courage prevailed and honor bound,
and their colors aloft, never touching the ground.
Somehow he lived, while so many other Zouaves died.
And mothers and wives, and the whole nation cried.

What happened to Davie McGill, the young dapper lad,
who smiled away troubles and made others glad?
Who charmed all the lassies that frequently strolled,
and amused them with stories and humor so bold.
Who gave to the needy and prayed for the rest,
What caused him to go with a war manifest?
They say the threat to the union and the call from the guard,
Made him join up and leave his home yard.
A transition to soldier, and honor, glory and fight,
Somehow occurred during the long winter night.
Now so distant from that farm in Pennsylvania;
To unheard of places like Wilderness and Spotsylvania.
From tending crops and working the horses,
To killing and fighting, walking among corpses.
He moved to the city with relatives close;
To write his way into story and prose.
Now he is gone, and can't ever come back.
The things that he's seen we can never retract.

Where has young Davie McGill gone, they ask?
Why, he now lives in a place named Gettysburg, I mask;
You know he and old Smyth saved the North, from the
Charge at the angle by the North Carolinians, of course.
He lives in C32 in the neighbor of other New York boys.
In hallowed cold ground set aside, by old Abe with great poise;
He said they consecrated the place with their last full measure.
So that a new birth of freedom would give us the pleasure,
Of a nation from Davie, slowly healing,
with equality and liberty the treasure.

Descendant R.J. McGill, 2002

Mary Todd Lincoln's Confederate Connections

by Walt Bittle

Mary Ann Todd Lincoln, born in Lexington, Kentucky, was the subject of much rumor and speculation. Her patriotism was questioned by many, as her entire family sided with the Confederacy. However she hoped they would all be killed because "they would kill my husband if they could and destroy our government".

Her brother, George Rogers Clark Todd, was a surgeon in the Confederate army. Her half-brother, Samuel B. Todd was killed at Shiloh. Another half-brother, David H. Todd died from wounds received at Vicksburg. And another, Alexander H. Todd, was killed at Baton Rouge. Two other brothers-in-law were also in the Confederate service.

Mary's sister Martha Todd White, a rabid Rebel, embarrassed Mary when she came to the White House demanding to see Mary, who refused. The President issued a pass for her to return to the South.

Her other sister, Emilie Todd Helm, was the widow of Confederate General Benjamin Hardin Helm, who was killed at Chickamauga. She and her children were welcomed to the White House in the Spring of 1864, but she was too much of a political liability to stay there for long.

President Lincoln later appeared before the Committee on the Conduct of the War and made this statement: "*I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, appear of my own volition before this committee of the Senate to say I, of my own knowledge, know that it is untrue that any of my family hold treasonable relations with the enemy*".

[Can you provide any names of Mary's relatives not listed here?]

Mahala Doyle: The War Begins

The War of Northern Aggression started at my house
four years and eleven months
before cannons boomed
over Fort Sumter. There are
people who have a
desire—a real need—
to hate. John Brown
hated slave owners; he said
God ordered him
to "break the jaws
of the wicked." He insisted
he was chosen as "the Angel
of the Lord." The Almighty
must not have wanted much.
John Brown had eyes
a skull would envy. He burst
through our door and his men
demanded our surrender to
"The Army of the North."
Our dogs never warned us
of their approach; days later,
carrying my husband's hand,
I found the two bulldogs
slashed to strips. The men
dragged my husband and my
two older boys outside; I begged
for my youngest. Drury
was ten. Standing together,
arms wrapped around
each other, we watched
Brown split the heads
--like melons--
of my husband and sons.
Then Brown hacked off
my husband's hand, giving it
to me, saying I might
want the ring. My body remained
screaming and standing
and screaming
but my soul knelt. Ten years
have passed and the War is
officially over. But Drury,
who screamed till his ears bled,
ain't spoke since that night
--Kit Knight--

**BG G. K. Warren,
Savior of the Round Tops**

Mid afternoon on July 2, 1862, the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, the Army of the Potomac's Chief Engineer Gouverneur K. Warren discovered that Little Round Top was undefended. He realized immediately that, if the enemy occupied this hill, the entire Union line on Cemetery Ridge could be enfiladed and subjected to



flanking from the left.

Without time to notify the Army Commander, General Meade, he quickly sent aids to round up troops to defend the hill. Col. Strong Vincent's Brigade arrived just in time to meet the onrushing Confederates. Warren also found Col. Patrick O'Rorke's 140th NY Infantry, and rushed them into the fight to save the day and the battle for the Union.

Colonels Vincent and O'Rorke were both killed during this action, as well as Brigade Commander, BG Steven Weed. In addition to a statue of General Warren, monuments on the crest of

Little Round Top also honor each of them. Col. Joshua Chamberlain's 20th Maine Infantry was present for portions of this engagement, for which he subsequently self-proclaimed much credit, and was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1893.



Big Guns at Fort Foote

Fort Foote was one of the 67 Civil War forts that formed the peripheral defense system for Washington, D.C. The fort's main armament consisted of 15 inch Rodman cannons. Due to the weight of the huge guns they have not been moved since installed in 1863. Except for a recent coat of paint, these pictures taken last month show them exactly as they were some 139 years ago. They are among the largest and heaviest artillery pieces used in the Civil War.

Notwithstanding their size, a well drilled 12 man crew could charge the gun with 40 pounds of black powder, load a 435 lbs. ball 15 inches in diameter, aim, and fire every four minutes. These smooth bores were not known for pinpoint accuracy, but their three-mile range with such a large explosive projectile made an impressive defense capability for the forts protecting the Nation's Capitol.

Submitted by Bob Williams