

Volume 45, No. 4  
April 2005

**2005 SCWRT  
Officers:**

**Don Hayden**, President  
(916) 485-1246  
[djhbooklover@yahoo.com](mailto:djhbooklover@yahoo.com)

**Susan Williams** Vice-  
President  
(916) 653-9557  
[swilliams@parks.ca.gov](mailto:swilliams@parks.ca.gov)

**Eddie Keister**, Secretary  
(916) 725-1852

**George Foxworth**,  
Treasurer  
(916) 362-0178  
[gwoffoxworth@earthlink.net](mailto:gwoffoxworth@earthlink.net)

**Brad Schall** (916) 408-  
4482  
Member-at-Large  
[dschall@starstream.net](mailto:dschall@starstream.net)

**Carol Breiter**, (916) 729-7644  
Member-at-Large  
[carolabreiter@aol.com](mailto:carolabreiter@aol.com)

**Bernardo Buenrostro**,  
Webmaster,  
(916) 362-9837  
[bernxb@ix.netcom.com](mailto:bernxb@ix.netcom.com)

**Jim Middleton**,  
9120 LaRiviera Dr.  
Sacramento, CA 95826  
(916) 363-8112  
[BattleCryEditor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:BattleCryEditor@sbcglobal.net)

Battle Cry deadline is  
1:00PM Wed. two weeks  
before the regular  
meeting. Items can be  
given the editor by hand,  
mail or e-mail.

# Battle Cry

Founded 1961,  
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table  
P.O. BOX 254702  
Sacramento, CA 95865-4702  
<http://sacramentocwrt.com/>



## President's Message:

Thanks to Fred Bohmfalk for a fascinating talk on the less well-known aspects of the lives of Grant, Sherman and Sheridan. The human side of these people is always of interest to me and their backgrounds must have played an important role in their ultimate actions. Well done, Fred, and thanks for stepping in for John Martini who will now speak to us in June on Fortress Alcatraz.

Gibson Ranch weekend is rapidly approaching. Remember our commitment to supply fifteen volunteer guides for the schoolchildren. I have participated for several years and have enjoyed the kids and the presentations of the re-enactors who are excellent at providing brief but salient facts while explaining their various roles. It's not terribly vigorous and the stations are well organized and marked. I strongly urge those who can spare Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> to assist.

Hope to see you April 13<sup>th</sup> for Phil Avila's talk *Kershaw, First to Last*. Come early for dinner and conversation if so inclined.

**NEXT MEETING!!! April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM at the Hof Brau on the northeast corner of El Camino & Watt Ave. Come early for dinner and conversation. Phil Avila will discuss Kershaw, from First to Last.**

**SEE UPCOMING PROGRAMS ON PAGE 2  
NOTE!!! The Editor has a new e-mail Address!!!**

**MINUTES**  
**SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**  
**WEDNESDAY MARCH 9, 2005**  
**HOF BRAU RESTAURANT 2500 WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO**

**ATTENDENCE 30**

**Members - 32**

Don Hayden, President	Mitchell Cnota	Jim Middleton	John Zasso
Susan Williams, Vice President	Kirk Fujikawa	Maurice Mitchell	<u>Guest - 5</u>
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Kyle Glasson	Paul Ruud	Bill Donaldson
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Dudley Albrecht	Robert Junell	Rudy Schafer	Mark Hayden
Bob Baskerville	Dennis Kohlmann	Richard Sickert	Bob Maerdian
Fred Bohmfalk	Mary Lou Lentz	Drew Van Winkle	Sharon McGaughey
Ardith Cnota	Leslie Michaels	Robert Williams	

1. Meeting started at 7:01. "This Day in Civil War History" was read.
2. President Hayden mentioned the book "Their Horses Climbed Trees," by Larry and Keith Rogers, whom we will try to acquire for a presentation. The novel is about the 100 California volunteers who fought in the Civil War.
3. Fred Bohmfalk gave his talk on Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. The presentation was very interesting and is always much better accompanied with photos, which Fred Provided. Thanks Fred, good job.
4. Brochures for the Reenactment at Gibson Ranch were available.
5. The raffle was held. Meeting ended at 8:40.

Eddie Keister  
Secretary

**Note: Item 2 above calls the book below a novel. It is history.**

Rogers, Larry and Keith Rogers. *Their Horses Climbed Trees: A Chronicle of the California 100 and Battalion in the Civil War, from San Francisco to Appomattox.* Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2001. (This is a collection of newspaper articles and letters concerning California military during the Civil War.)

**Upcoming Programs 2005**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>
April	Phil Avila	Kershaw- From First to Last
May	Walt Bittle	Events Leading To Attack on Ft. Sumter
June	John Martini	Fortress Alcatraz
July	Paul Ruud	Lincoln Assassination
August	Open	
September	George Beitzel	Lincoln at Ft. Stevens and Presidential Military Exp.
October	Ray Bisio	To the Edge of Greatness: Meade at Gettysburg
November	Open	
December	Maurice Mitchell	Recontruotion



**The Hunley  
California Tour  
1<sup>st</sup> at Gibson Ranch**

On the cold night of February 17, 1864, the submarine H.L. Hunley attacked the warship Housatonic, sinking her in a matter of minutes. This American technological marvel thus became the first submarine in the world to sink a ship.

For reasons that continue to baffle the scientific community, the Hunley failed to return to port. She and her crew remained as a time capsule at the bottom of the Charleston, South Carolina Harbor for 136 years.

Raised from the depths in August 2000, the Hunley and her crew have been the focus of a world-class team of archaeologists, forensic experts and other scientific disciplines who continue their efforts to unravel her secrets.

The Hunley is now the property of the U.S.

government. She is on permanent loan to the Hunley Commission in South Carolina. The submarine and her crew have been the subject of two National Geographic television specials and have made repeated headlines worldwide.

Now the Hunley Team has utilized 3-D laser scanning and hands-on experience to create an exact replica of this priceless national treasure.

California is indeed privileged to be the

location of the first tour of this truly remarkable reproduction - this engineering marvel that was so very far ahead of her time.

Staffed by members of the Hunley Team, this exhibit brings a wealth of knowledge concerning one of the most remarkable events in America's history.

Gibson Ranch County Park has the honor to be the site of her first appearance on the tour.

*Presented by the  
National Civil War Association*

FOOD CONCESSIONS AVAILABLE  
10:00am - 5:00pm

LIVING HISTORY CAMPS OPEN  
10:00am - 5:00pm Saturday  
9:00am - 3:00pm Sunday

BATTLE RE-ENACTMENTS  
Battle at 12:30pm and 4:30pm Saturday  
Battle 11:00am and 2:00pm Sunday  
*Seating will be "picnic style", bring a blanket*

- CIVIL WAR FASHION SHOW
- 
- CIVIL WAR MUSIC & DANCING
- 
- SCHOOL PROGRAM  
May 6th - Reservation Required
- 
- 1860 CRAFTS
- 
- SPEECHES BY  
HISTORICAL CHARACTERS
- 
- HORSE DRAWN WAGON RIDES

**GIBSON RANCH COUNTY PARK  
May 7th & 8th, 2005**



8556 Gibson Ranch Road, Elverta, CA 95626

(916) 991-2686 (event line)

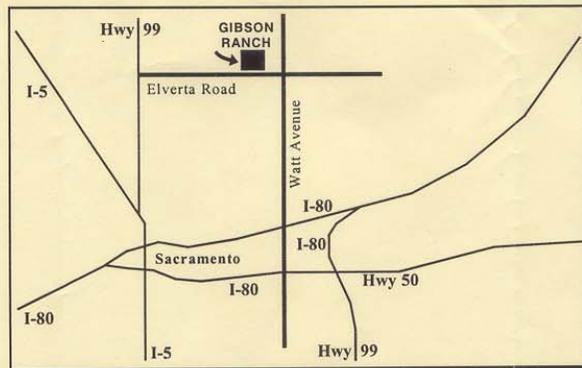
[www.gibson-ranch.com](http://www.gibson-ranch.com)

General Admission ..... \$ 10 each  
Seniors (55 and older) ..... \$ 8 each  
Children (14 and under) .. \$ 8 each  
Children (5 and under) ..... FREE  
Group Discounts Available

*Not recommended for small children & pets*

Parking ..... Included

*Advanced Ticket Sale \$ 1.00 discount per ticket.  
Must be purchased by April 15th. (916) 991-7592*



*Sponsored by:  
Rio Linda/Elverta  
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Department of Regional Parks  
& Open Space  
Boy Scout Troup 53*

(E) GCW0128-5

**Local Contact: John Nevins [scss1co@pacbell.net](mailto:scss1co@pacbell.net) (916) 725-2891  
for information.**

**Contact Don Hayden (916) 485-1246 to volunteer for the school program at Gibson Ranch on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Great fun and your help is needed. You do not need to be an expert in the Civil War to help. You will be taking groups of children from one station to another.**

The following e-mail was received from Mack Stanley.

**From:** [Mack Stanley](#)  
**To:** [George W. Foxworth](#)  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 12, 2005 9:06 PM  
**Subject:** Re: 2005 West Coast Civil War Conference

George,  
Sorry to be the bearer of bad news. The 2005 WCCWRT won't be in Scottsdale in Nov. The budget proposed by the organizer blew us out of the water. It was estimated that we would need about \$8,000 and we had only about \$1,500. The board decided we couldn't take a chance on potential attendees. Since Alice Anne Russell will have no more to do with it, I suppose 2006 is the next time our paths may cross.  
Mack Stanley

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Much Too Long to Be a Good Trivia Question  
by Walt Bittle

As Secretary of the Treasury, he wrote and successfully lobbied a bill through Congress, thus causing a major overhaul of the currency and banking laws in the United States. To help set himself up as a candidate for the Presidency, he put his own picture on a piece of currency. He failed in his nomination bid, but the incumbent President still appointed him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Some years later, he led the majority of the Court in striking down the currency law he had written as "unconstitutional". Who was this man of irony? On what bill did he choose to exhibit his own likeness?

**Salmon Portland Chase and it was the \$10,000 bill, no longer in circulation, of course.**

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Found in [FieldsOfConflict@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FieldsOfConflict@yahoogroups.com)

Thomas P. Lowry, M.D. called *The Story the Soldiers Wouldn't Tell (Sex in the Civil War)*. Printed by Stackpole Books, 1994. ISBN # 0-8117-1515-9.

"It tells of prosecution of privates and ranking military on BOTH sides of the conflict for mistreatment of white and colored women. But it burrows much deeper than simply listing those types of crimes. Interesting reading by someone who tries to take a leap back in time". Quote above by Brad Roberts, 3-31-05.

## **Outdoor Sound Propagation in the U.S. Civil War by Charles D. Ross<sup>1</sup>**

Students of military history know that acoustic refraction and unusual audibility have often played significant roles in the outcome of battles. Before electrical and wireless communications became common on the tactical level, the sound of battle was often the quickest and most efficient method by which a commander could judge the course of a battle. Troop dispositions were often made based on the relative intensity of the sounds from different locations on the battlefield.

Unusual acoustics due to atmospheric conditions or to terrain are sometimes given the catch-all name "acoustic shadows." The first recorded incidence of the phenomenon occurred during the Four-Day Battle in 1666. The naval battle was fought between the coasts of England and Holland, and sounds of the battle were heard clearly at many points throughout England but not at intervening points. Passengers on a yacht positioned between the battle and England heard nothing. A number of other examples have been recorded since that time. Guns fired at the funeral of Queen Victoria in London in 1901 were heard in Scotland, but not across a wide region in between. The German bombardment of Antwerp in World War I was heard clearly for a 30-mile radius, then beyond 60 miles from the Belgian city, but not in between.

In the course of my research for my book on science and technology in the Civil War, I noted examples of similar acoustical phenomena. Some historians were apparently aware of these incidents, but no one had ever investigated their causes. By intensive study of war records, regimental histories, diaries, and period newspapers, I was able to piece together information allowing me to determine the causes of each acoustical shadow. The most famous battles during which these events occurred and affected command decisions were: Seven Pines, Gettysburg, Iuka, Fort Donelson, Chancellorsville, Five Forks, and Perryville. Unusual audibility at great distances was associated with several of these battles and also with the battle of Gaines' Mill.

In each of these seven battles listed above, the inability of commanders to hear and interpret the sounds of battle was directly responsible for the outcome. One might even go so far as to say the acoustical shadows determined the course of the entire war. The unusual acoustics at Seven Pines placed Confederate commander Joseph Johnston in a position of danger when the battle should have been over. Because of Johnston's wound, Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate forces two days later.

### **The Causes of Acoustical Shadows**

Acoustical shadows can usually be traced to one or more of three causes: absorption, wind direction and wind shear, or temperature inversions. Absorption-- Sometimes material between a sound source and an observer will render the sound inaudible. The material can be soil (Gettysburg), forest (Five Forks and Chancellorsville), snow (Fort Donelson) or a variety of other substances. Wind direction and wind shear--In general, sounds are more likely to be heard downwind of a sound source than upwind. Since winds aloft are usually faster than at ground level,

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<sup>1</sup> Ross, Charles. *Trial by Fire: Science, Technology and the Civil War*. White Mane Publishing Co., 1999.

the upper part of a sound wave will travel faster than the lower part when traveling with the wind and more slowly when against the wind. This will cause a refraction towards the ground in the former case and away from the ground in the latter case. Such an effect was certainly at work at Fort Donelson and Iuka.

Temperature inversions--Sound waves travel faster in warm air than cool air (the speed (m/s) is approximately  $331.36+0.6067t$ , where  $t$  is temperature in Celsius). Under most conditions, the air temperature decreases as altitude increases. This causes sound waves to refract upwards and decreases audibility along the ground at a distance. Sometimes, however, the temperature is higher above the ground than near the ground - a condition called a temperature inversion. The effect is to bend sound waves back towards the ground and increase audibility. Temperature inversions are common on clear, cool nights (and the mornings following them) and during widespread rainstorms (at Gettysburg and Seven Pines, for example, and also at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky in 1862).

Sometimes upwardly refracted waves hit a warmer layer higher up and are refracted back down, creating rings of audibility, as in the battle of Gettysburg as well as in the European examples previously described.

**Five Forks**--The scene - On April 1, 1865, Confederate forces under Major General George Pickett held the far western flank of General Robert E. Lee's Petersburg defenses. Pickett's forces were at Five Forks, the intersection of five country roads, located about 12 miles from Petersburg. Lee's forces were stretched thin, and protecting this right flank was crucial to maintaining the integrity of the Confederate position and the safety of the capital in Richmond. Holding the position also offered Lee the possibility of slipping away to the southwest and joining up with forces under General Joseph E. Johnston in North Carolina. Wary of the threat of losing Lee after having had him clamped down around Petersburg for almost a year, Union General Ulysses S. Grant sent cavalry under Major General Philip Sheridan to probe the position at Five Forks. After being repulsed on March 31, Sheridan informed Grant that he could turn the Confederate right if he had support from an infantry corps. Accordingly, by the morning of April 1, the Union V Corps under G. K. Warren was arriving on the scene.

What happened - The Confederates were entrenched at Five Forks, with cavalry units dug in on the flanks, Pickett's infantry in the center, and reserves under Brigadier Thomas Rosser behind Pickett's men. On the morning of April 1, Rosser invited Pickett and Major General Fitzhugh Lee (in command of the cavalry) to his position (on a stream a mile behind the lines to a "shad bake" or fish roast. Despite the imminent danger from the enemy, both generals inexplicably accepted the offer. When Sheridan and Warren began their attack in mid-afternoon, the Confederate commanders were blissfully unaware, of their impending doom. In between the front lines and Rosser's position was a dense pine forest which completely absorbed the sound of small arms fire. In the crucial opening minutes of the battle, the leaderless Confederates were overwhelmed by Union forces on their left. The battle of Five Forks quickly turned into a rout and signaled the beginning of the end for Lee's army. With his flank turned, Lee was forced to abandon Petersburg and Richmond and flee to the west. Eight days later, Grant and Sheridan caught the Confederates at Appomattox Court House, where Lee surrendered.

**Chancellorsville** The scene - Spring of 1863 found the Union Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia in a standoff across the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg. After the crushing Union defeat there in December 1862, Union morale was low. The new Union commander, Major General Joseph Hooker, unveiled a plan designed to surprise and crush the Confederate forces. Leaving a large force in front of Fredericksburg, in late April he took five infantry corps upriver and crossed fords to the southern bank. Confederate commander Robert E. Lee was not aware of the maneuver until the Federals were already over the river. Lee now had an enemy force in front of him and one on his left flank, each larger than his whole army. It seemed his only choices were either to retreat towards Richmond or be crushed in the Union vise.

What happened - Defying conventional military strategy, Lee separated his forces despite being outnumbered. Leaving a small force on the heights behind Fredericksburg, Lee took the rest of his army to meet Hooker head on. The armies clashed on May 1 near the crossroads of Chancellorsville. Though his troops outnumbered the Confederates, Hooker seemed momentarily stunned by the opposition and halted his men in a defensive position along the Orange Turnpike. The next day Lee gambled again. He sent forces under Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson on one of history's greatest flanking attacks. Using a guide and traveling over little-known farm roads, Jackson managed to get his men on the left flank of the Union position without being detected. Near sundown on May 2, Jackson's forces attacked, rolling up the stunned Union army. Hooker, at Chancellorsville, was shielded from the sounds of battle by the dense forest known locally as "The Wilderness" and first became aware of the rout as panic-stricken Federal soldiers overran his position. There was undoubtedly a refractive effect at work on this day as well: Confederate Major General Cadmus Wilcox, 10 miles to the east near Fredericksburg, noted the sounds of battle clearly. This refraction may have been due to wind shear (high winds kept Union balloonists grounded).

**Seven Pines**---The scene - After the Union debacle at Bull Run, George C. McClellan was placed in command of the forces around Washington. Rather than move towards Richmond directly overland, McClellan decided to save his infantry some work by shipping them to the peninsula southeast of Richmond to begin his attack from there. Working against the able but cautious Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston, McClellan's men worked their way slowly but steadily up the peninsula until by late May 1862 McClellan could hear the clocks of Richmond striking from his headquarters. Under pressure from the Confederate government to take some action to save the capital, Johnston mapped out a plan. He formulated a three-pronged attack in which Confederate forces would be funneled by three different roads towards a convergence on the Union forces at the intersection called Seven Pines.

What happened - The plan was complex and required perfect timing on the part of Johnston's subordinates. Instead, what Johnston got was bickering and arguments about seniority among the Confederate generals as their troops ran into each other and blocked each other's routes. Still, by early afternoon the Confederates had managed to attack and were holding their own against the Federals. Johnston, at his headquarters near Fair Oaks a few miles from the front lines, did not hear the battle and

could not be convinced by others that a fight was raging. He held key reserves back until a desperate note from Major General James Longstreet at 4 o'clock convinced him that a battle was indeed underway. By then it was too late; the Federals had been reinforced by troops under Edwin Sumner, and the battle ended in a draw. Near dusk, Johnston went to observe the closing moments of the conflict and was seriously wounded. Two days later, Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate forces, replacing the wounded Johnston.

The battle, silent to Johnston two miles from the front, was heard clearly by citizens of Richmond ten miles to the west and to Federals as far to the east. The probable cause was a temperature inversion bending the sound back to the ground. On the night before the battle, a violent thunderstorm (many soldiers said it was the worst they had ever seen) raged over the area. The day of the battle dawned with widespread, low cloud cover-ideal conditions for a low- atmosphere temperature inversion.

**Gettysburg---**The scene - In the summer of 1863, the Confederacy was in dire straits. The vital garrison at Vicksburg, Mississippi was under siege and near collapse. In the east, things looked better, but the situation was still bad. The Army of Northern Virginia had withstood all Union attempts to take the war to Richmond, but General Robert E. Lee knew that he faced an uphill battle. The Union seemed to have a never-ending supply of men ready to volunteer, filling holes in the ranks, while the Confederate rosters dwindled to ever-smaller numbers. And the war-ravaged land north of Richmond could not long support his men and horses. In the hopes of relieving the pressure on Vicksburg and giving his men access to the fertile bounty of the north, Lee decided to invade Pennsylvania. The Confederates and the Union troops, now under Major General George Meade, met at the town of Gettysburg. The Confederates had the better of it on the first day, but the Federals dug in along a series of hills and ridges behind Gettysburg.

What happened - July 2 dawned hot and sunny, and Lee had a plan for dislodging the Union army from its perch. While forces on the Confederate left under Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell made a show of force, troops under Lieutenant General James Longstreet on the Confederate right would attack and take the virtually unoccupied Round Top Mountains at the south end of Cemetery Ridge. Confederate artillery would be able to sweep Meade's men from the hills. Ewell's demonstration was to begin when he heard the artillery barrage which would signal the beginning of Longstreet's attack. For a long time after Longstreet had begun his attack, Ewell heard nothing and hence did not move his troops. As a result, Meade was able to shift troops from the right of his line down towards the Round Tops, just in the nick of time to defeat Longstreet's attack. Ewell's inability to hear Longstreet's artillery appears to stem first from the shielding effects of Cemetery Ridge and Culp's Hill between the two Confederate forces. More importantly, the hot temperatures near the ground probably caused a dramatic upward refraction of sound waves. Upon hitting another warm layer higher up, these waves could be refracted back downwards. On the previous day, Meade had been unable to hear the Gettysburg fighting from his position at Taneytown (12 miles away), yet the battle was clearly audible in Pittsburgh, 150 miles from Gettysburg.