



**Volume 55, No 4
April, 2015**

2015 Officers:

Anne M. Peasley, President
(530) 320-5112
apeasley22@gmail.com

Robert E. Hanley, IPP
(805) 796-5895
acivilwar@aol.com

**Donald J. Hayden, Vice
President**
(916) 485-1246
djhbooklover@yahoo.com

Silver N. Williams,
Program Director
(916) 408-4574
snw5678@aol.com

Paul G. Ruud, Secretary
(530) 886-8806
paulgruud@gmail.com

George W. Foxworth,
Treasurer
(916) 362-0178
gwofforth@sbcglobal.net

Nina L. Henley, MAL
(916) 481-4146
whenley@surewest.net

Wayne J. Henley, MAL
(916) 481-4146
whenley@surewest.net

VACANT
Editor

SCWRT Website
www.sacramentocwrt.com

Kim Knighton, Webmaster
webmaster@digitalthumbprint.com

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

Hail Fellow Civil War Aficionados!

"It's still called Bullion Bend, that stretch of curving old stage road from Placerville to Carson Valley". Haunting, yes? Many of us members of California Civil War Round Tables often look for tie-ins to the events of Back East 150 years ago. This month, we have just that: Richard Sickert will regale us with a grand tale of wild adventure that happened here in our backyard. His program entitled "Robbery at Bullion Bend—A Legitimate Confederate Fundraiser or Just Another Get Rich Quick Scheme Gone Bad?" promises to be an edge of your seat experience. He even has a mystery guest appearance by.... Well, I guess you'll just have to show up for this one.

Richard has been a long time member of our Round Table and has served as a Board Member in the past. He and his wife are avid travelers and lovers of History. (He's also a self-proclaimed tree-hugger, a man after my own heart!) I know his presentation has been meticulously researched and will be a treat for us.

As we look back to April of 1865, we have George Beitzel to thank for his discussion last month of the fateful Good Friday at Ford's Theater and the tragic events that transpired. His introduction of the individuals who were up close and personal when Abraham Lincoln was shot gave us an immediate impression of how powerful and deadly the reverberations of that night were.

Could April of 1865 have been the most pivotal month in our nation's history? I believe so, but I'm always up for an argument.

I trust that our members are marking their calendars for the Gibson Ranch Civil War Days on the weekend of May1-3. We hope you have the opportunity to participate on Friday and will join us the rest of the weekend and hang out at our booth for Saturday and Sunday. We love the company, and you'll have the chance to explain what our group is all about.

I hope to see each and every one of you at our next meeting on April 8th.

Until then,

Anne Peasley, President

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

ATTENDANCE – 30

MEMBERS – 26: Anne M. Peasley, President, Donald J. Hayden, Vice President, George W. Foxworth, Treasurer, Paul Ruud, Secretary, Silver Williams, Program Director, James M. Armstrong, George Beitzel, Joan Beitzel, Roy Bishop, Harvey Cain, Marsha Jutovsky Cain, Ardith Cnota, Mitch Cnota, Monica Foxworth, Alan Geiken, Robert E. Hanley, IPP, Dennis Kohlmann, Arnold Kunst, Rick A. Peasley, Horst Penning, Richard Sickert, Roxanne E. Spizzirri, Michael E. Werner, Susan Williams, John V. Zasso, Vivian Zasso.

GUESTS – 4: Ester Boeck, Ed Rill, Larry Spizzirri, Richard Spizzirri

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Anne Peasley.
2. President Peasley led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. President Peasley sought support from the audience for Gibson Ranch; particularly to volunteer to be student docents on Friday, May 1st, but also for Saturday and Sunday, May 2nd and 3rd.
4. George Beitzel was introduced – he would not only introduce us to the “Worst Seat in the House,” but explain who sat in it and where it all happened. George explained that he had changed program topics recently as he read about new and exciting Civil War Events.
 - A. The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln was the program subject for the evening. Lincoln was accompanied to Ford’s Theater on April 14, 1865, by his wife and by Major Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris. Rathbone’s seat in the President’s box was behind that of the first family and his fiancée, thus the worst seat in the house since his view of the stage was minimal.
 - B. John Wilkes Booth had earlier planned to take the President hostage and hold him for prisoner exchange, but that had not worked as planned. His current plan was to decapitate the Union government by assassinating Lincoln, Vice President Johnson, and Secretary of State Seward.
 - C. Booth entered the Theater and planned his attack during a moment of loud applause in the play, “Our American Cousin.” Thinking that the President was secure, his main security guard had gone to a next door bar for a drink. Booth entered the President’s box, blocked the entry door, and proceeded to shoot Lincoln with his 44 caliber derringer. Major Rathbone came to the President’s aid and his arm was severely cut in the ensuing tussle. Booth, nonetheless, managed to jump from the box onto the stage and remained at large for 14 days before he was tracked down and killed during capture.
 - D. Lincoln was removed from Ford’s Theater and taken across the street to the Peterson House where he died a few hours later.
 - E. Four people most involved in the assassination were tried and hanged in July.
 - F. Rathbone never mentally recovered from the events of the evening. He lived a troubled life and later in what had to be a total mental breakdown, shot his wife Clara and then stabbed himself multiple times. This was most likely post traumatic stress syndrome a century and a half before it was named.
 - G. George passed his collection of 44 caliber mini balls around for the audience to see.
8. President Peasley thanked George Beitzel for his excellent presentation.
9. John Zasso sold additional raffle tickets and read the lucky numbers.
10. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM. The April Board Meeting will be Wednesday, April 8, 2015, 10 AM, at Brookfield’s Restaurant. Come one, come all!

Paul Ruud, Secretary

Treasurer’s Report

The cash balance following the March 11, 2015 meeting was \$5,025.33. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$35.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs for 2015 and 2016

Date	Speaker	Topic
April 8th	Richard Sickert	“Robbery at Bullion Bend—A Legitimate Confederate Fundraiser or Just Another Get Rich Quick Scheme Gone Bad?”
May 13th	Robert R. Hubbs	“Four Regiments and Four Privates”
June 10th	Martin Cain	“Baseball in the Civil War”
July 8th	Joe Maxwell	“George Armstrong Custer, Part II”
August 12th	Nancy B. Samuelson	“Nathan Bedford Forrest”
September 9th	Fred Bohmfalk	“A Personal Look at the Lives of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan”
October 14th	Tom Lubas	“Chicago, That Toddlin’ Civil War Town”
November 11th	Tad Smith	“The Failed Struggle to Obtain Recognition of the Confederacy by England and France”
December 9th	Nicholas Scivoletto	“General Joseph E. Johnston”
January 13th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
February 10th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
March 9th	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

2015 Membership

The 2015 membership renewal is due as of January 1, 2015. 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:

gwofforth@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.

“The War That Forged a Nation: Why the Civil War Still Matters”

Hardcover – March 12, 2015

by James M. McPherson

More than 140 years ago, Mark Twain observed that the Civil War had "uprooted institutions that were centuries old, changed the politics of a people, transformed the social life of half the country, and wrought so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured short of two or three generations." In fact, five generations have passed, and Americans are still trying to measure the influence of the immense fratricidal conflict that nearly tore the nation apart.

In *The War that Forged a Nation*, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James M. McPherson considers why the Civil War remains so deeply embedded in our national psyche and identity. The drama and tragedy of the War, from its scope and size – an estimated death toll of 750,000, far more than the rest of the country's wars combined – to the nearly mythical individuals involved – Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson – help explain why the Civil War remains a topic of interest. But the legacy of the War extends far beyond historical interest or scholarly attention. Here, McPherson draws upon his work over the past fifty years to illuminate the War's continuing resonance across many dimensions of American life.

Touching upon themes that include the War's causes and consequences; the naval war; slavery and its abolition; and Lincoln as Commander in Chief, McPherson ultimately proves the impossibility of understanding the issues of our own time unless we first understand their roots in the era of the Civil War. From racial inequality and conflict between the North and South to questions of state sovereignty or the role of government in social change – these issues, McPherson shows, are as salient and controversial today as they were in the 1860s.

Thoughtful, provocative, and authoritative, *The War that Forged a Nation* looks anew at the reasons America's civil war has remained a subject of intense interest for the past century and a half, and affirms the enduring relevance of the conflict for America today.



Mythology, Stretch, Hyperbole, & Spin all led to The Legend of the Lost Cause

In reference to ancient times, it was known as “Mythology.” In my teens, I would call it a “Stretch,” although my Mother would note it as a “Fib” or a Lie,” depending upon the severity of the event. In modern times, it has come to be known as “Hyperbole” and/or “Spin.” But in the Southern States after the Civil War (and even to this day), it was and is called “The Legend of the Lost Cause,” or more simply, “The Lost Cause.”

In April 1865 after Appomattox, the perpetrators of the War of the Rebellion recognized that they had some tall explaining to do. There was a very definite need to “accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.” This would not be an easy task, however, since the negatives outnumbered the positives by a ratio approaching infinity.

Historian James McPherson has summed up the consequences of the rebellion on the South as follows: a 67% reduction in assessed valuation of wealth, 25% of white men ages 20-40 killed, 40% of livestock killed, 50% of farm machinery destroyed, 46% decline in manufacturing and agricultural capital, 1000’s of miles of railroads destroyed, and scores of 1000’s of farms and plantations in ruins. In 1860, the Southern States had contained 30% of the national wealth; in 1870, only 12%. In 1860 the average per capita income of Southerners, *including* slaves was 67% of Northerners, dropping to 40% afterwards and not raising above that level until the 20th Century. Such were the physical and economic impacts of the South’s bid for independence.

Leaders of such a catastrophe had to account for themselves. Justification was necessary. Those who followed the leaders into the rebellion also needed a rationalization. They said, “If we can not justify the South in the act of Secession, we will be forever considered solely as a brave, impulsive but rash people

who attempted in an illegal manner to overthrow the Union of our Country.” Hence two independent versions of the American Civil War came into being. On the one hand, there is the *History* which is based on *facts*. On the other is the *Legend*, which is derived from *selective facts* and *fiction*. Thus the purpose of the Legend of the Lost Cause was to mask the Southerners’ tragic and self-destructive mistakes. It was a skillfully prepared cover-up, the victim of which has been History itself – and it continues today.

Historian Gary Gallagher, author Alan Noland, and several other Civil War scholars have catalogued the many precepts and methods used by Lost Cause advocates of the past and present. Some of these are noted in the following paragraphs:

1. Slavery was a social system that provided unique benefits, both for the slaves whom it placed under the fatherly care of a superior race and for the master who was given freedom from toil necessary for the creation of a superior culture. But slavery was not an issue of the War. Jefferson Davis said after Appomattox, “slavery was in no wise the cause of the conflict.” Vice President Alexander Stevens observed, “the War was not a contest between the advocates or opponents of the peculiar institution.” The South would have given up slavery in any event, but the abolitionists were the troublemakers and provocateurs, and the War was a foolish and vain thing on the part of the North. Many Lost Cause adherents also enjoyed using the “Happy Darcy” concept wherein it was said that the faithful and content slaves greatly enjoyed their lifestyles. This approach lasted well into the mid-20th Century with “Gone with the Wind,” and beyond. Another approach to the slavery matters used by some Lost Cause advocates was simply to ignore them altogether. In view of the factual situation to the contrary, that may have indeed been their best way out! Accordingly, the conclusion that one is asked to draw here is that under no circumstances had the South seceded to protect slavery!

2. Having thus eliminated slavery as a source of contention, the South next attempted to create a nationalist/cultural basis for the disagreement. This item also embraced such things as trade disputes, control of investment banking, means of wealth, and conflicts between agricultural and industrial societies. This one got a little wild. It said Northerners were descendants of backward Anglo-Saxon tribes, whereas Southern ancestors were the gallant, chivalrous, Norman Knights of intellect who had conquered the Anglos. Hence the Confederacy appropriated a distinctive past and a nationality of their very own, and a much better one than

that of those residing north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Ill will was thusly created in the North causing them to develop a “get even” attitude. Wow!

3. This was known as the “stabbed-in-the-back” myth. It presented a confusing and contradictory set of assertions along the following lines. The Confeds had really not been defeated, but instead overwhelmed by massive northern manpower and material. Such action constituted Yankee trickery and unfairness. Furthermore, the South’s loss was said to be inevitable from the beginning. Hence it follows that, since the South could not have won, it somehow did not lose. Huh? On the other hand, it was asserted that if the South had won at Gettysburg, it would have won the War; and, of course, everyone knows that Longstreet lost it at Gettysburg! Another rationale for this loss was Stonewall Jackson’s death earlier in 1863. Note that there is very little mention in Lost Cause literature of happenings in the western theatre.

4. The Lost Cause doctrine frequently asserted that secession was a constitutional right. Such being the case those supporting it were not rebels or traitors, since there had not been a revolution or rebellion. The premise was that since the Constitution was silent on the issue, withdrawal from the Union was permitted. Additionally, some of the early handwritten copies of the Declaration of Independence had neglected to capitalize the word “united” in the heading, “United States of America.” Hence, the doctrinaires grasp upon a conclusion that there really was never a permanent Union of States intended by the founding fathers. Rather it had been only a temporary coalition, ostensibly to do further battle with George III.

5. In the context of the Legend, Southerners were superior. Cavalier aristocrats and martyrs along with the fortunate happy darkies had blessed the South. They possessed “grace and gentility” not found elsewhere, and were united in the defense of the South’s “humane and superior culture.” The rebel soldiers who were fighting not in defense of slavery, they were told, but against Northern aggression were invariably “heroic, gallant, indefatigable, and law-abiding.” Indeed, most of them were, but Lost Cause writers universally demonized Union soldiers. Their approach was to set aside such events as the Fort Pillow murders, and to romanticize rebel guerrilla activities by irregulars such as Moseby, Morgan, and Quantrill; but to condemn Sherman’s Bummers and the perceived burning of Columbus, etc. The latter actions were “unfair,” whereas the formers were “heroic and gallant.” Whoops!

6. Another feature of the Legend was the manner of presenting some of the more successful rebel military leaders. This was done not only on the basis of military skills and combat effectiveness, but also with a high degree of deification. R. E. Lee and T. J. Jackson were the primary recipients of this phenomenon. By 1868, they had become remarkable and saintly fellows possessing God-like and Christ-like features, respectively. Of Lee, it was said that he was “bathed in the white light that falls directly upon him from the smile of an approving and sustaining God.” Jackson was “a spiritual prince,” “standing alone upon a high pedestal” and a “true soldier of the cross.” Currently, a third rebel general officer; N. B. Forrest is in the midst of his apotheosis in the hands of contemporary neo-Confederates. God, it seems also had him by the hand. Forrest may not make it, however; for, it is alleged the Ku Klux Klan had him by the other hand. Forrest was indeed a superb combat commander, but being God-like seems a bit of a “stretch.” The Legend’s images of Lee and Jackson are also at odds with the facts and unsupported by history.

In summary, the many elements of the Legend of the Lost Cause taken together created the Southern image sought. There had been a distinctive and superior Southern culture, benign and effective in its race relations. That culture was led by wise and superior men who seceded because:

They sought freedom from an oppressive Northern culture. They did not lose the War, but failed because of overwhelming Northern power. Secession was legal because it was not expressly forbidden by the Constitution. (Presumably by the same analogy, so was horse stealing?) The warfare itself was a contest of honor and glory in which the chivalrous and valorous Southerners pursued a tournament seeking independence from crude and vulgar opponents.

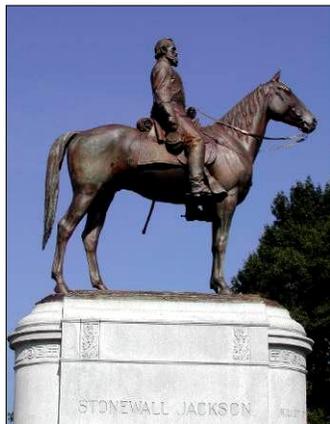
The Lost Cause Legend and its many mutations over the past 150 years are a caricature of the truth. It is a lie and a corruption of history; and, no analytical treatment can render it otherwise.

It is the duty of Civil War Round Tables to seek the truth, not to perpetuate the Legend.

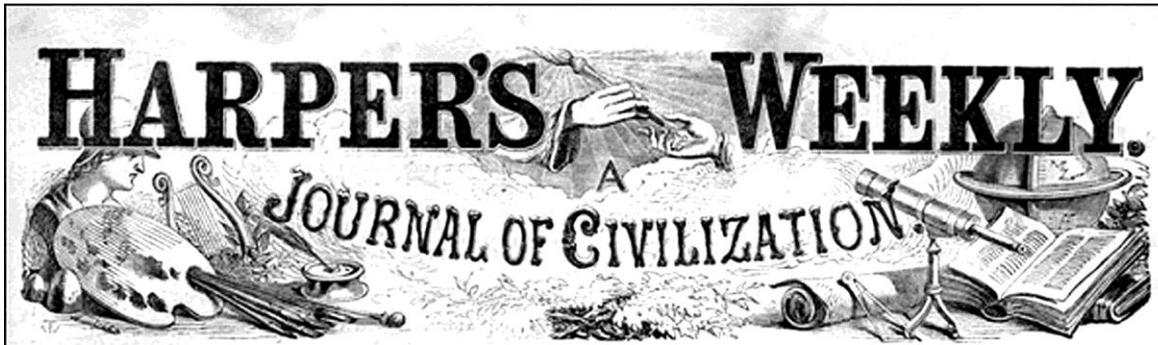
References: “The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History,” Edited by Gary Gallagher and Alan Nolan; “The Marble Man,” by T. L. Connelly; “Uncertain Glory,” by J. D. McKenzie; “Lee Considered,” by A. T. Nolan; “The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy,” by W. C. Davis

Bob Williams: 2-01-20-04; rev. 10-14-2014

The Marble Man



A Family Activity in the White House One Hundred Fifty Years Ago



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PRESIDENT LINCOLN AT HOME.—[PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRADY.]