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Deadline is 1:00PM, last

Wed. of the month 2 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

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President's Message:

It was great to have Larry Tagg with us again treating us to his third splendid discussion and we greatly appreciate him giving a talk at Gibson Ranch as well. We are fortunate to have him in our community and I envy his students who have such a fine teacher. We are looking forward to his contributions to November, 2011 Conference here in Sacramento. Larry's subject was Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and, as always, from his perspective, one gleans new information.

On a sadder note we are losing our loyal, long serving and superbly competent editor of our Battle Cry, Jim Middleton. Please note his missive to all of us in last month's edition. Jim has valiantly manned his post despite chronic health problems and I and the board will miss him. Nonetheless we need to seek a volunteer who is willing to fill his shoes. He is available to assist in introducing a candidate in the fine points of putting together a newsletter. Please call me or any member of the board, including Jim, if you have questions or might be interested.

My profound thanks to the crew who came out to Gibson Ranch both to escort the students and to serve at our booth on Saturday and Sunday. There is some question whether or not the site will continue to host the re-enactments in the future as the county may have other plans. We'll keep you posted on that issue.

Once again traditional hallowed Civil War sites such as Gettysburg and The Wilderness are threatened; the former by a new proposal for a gambling casino and the latter by a Walmart. If this gives you anxiety contact me and I'll suggest some people to get in touch with. At our next meeting I will place blank name-tags and a marking pen at a back table encourage members and guests to wear one. Many of us would like to get to know each other a little better and I hope to facilitate that. Our next meeting will be June 9th, 7PM at Sam's Hof Brau

Our speaker is Sherri Patton who is recruited by Rose Browne who assures us she is a superb teacher. Her subject is The Memphis Riots of 1866 which sounds interesting. Please join us and consider coming early for dinner and/or meeting the speaker and fellow members.

Don Hayden, President

MINUTES
Sacramento Civil War Round Table
May 12, 2010
Hof Brau Restaurant, 2500 Watt Ave, Sacramento

Attendance-44

Members-34

Don Hayden, President	Fred Elenbaas	Grace Long	Richard Sickert, MAL
Silver Williams, Vice President	Alan Geiken	Jim Middleton, Editor	Brent Ten Pas
George Foxworth, Treasurer	Bob Hanley	Bruce Nothmann	Susan Williams
Eddie Keister, Secretary	Scottie Hayden	Anne Peasley	Maxine Wollen
George Beitzel	Nancy Hayden	Rick Peasley	John Zasso
Fred Bohmfalk	Nina Henley	Horst Penning	<u>Guest-9</u>
Rose Browne	Wayne Henley	Paul Ruud, IPP	Phillip Blaine
Ardith Cnota	Chuck Hubbard	Nancy Samuelson	Ellen Bromberg
Mitchell Cnota	Dennis Kohlmann, PD	Kris Scivoletto	Justin Dzakonski
Jerry Cress	Lowell Lardie	Nicholas Scivoletto	Anne Hiatlie
			Sean Keister
			Raoul Kleven
			Jack Kevin Mix
			Robert Schroeder
			Larry Tagg

1. Meeting started at 7:01. President Hayden spoke on the 142nd anniversary of the first Memorial Day Observance at historic City Cemetery to be held Sunday, May 30th at 10:00 a.m., 1000 Broadway. One of the sponsors will be the Elk Grove CWRT.
2. Member Richard Sickert shared his May Exploritas trip with the club-many sites- Ft. Monroe, Cold Harbor, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville to name a few- He also spoke on the Civil War Preservation Trust working to keep a Wal-Mart out of the area.
3. Member Fred Bohmfalk reminded us of the 26th West Coast Conference November 12-14 in San Francisco. "Coastal Defense" – tours of Alcatraz and Ft. Point will be included.
4. Guest were welcomed-we had many- nine
5. Author and educator Larry Tagg presented "The Emancipation Proclamation." He spoke in depth of the concept, pros and cons- (North and South), and the many trials Lincoln went through to bring it to fruition. An excellent presentation. A question and answer session followed.
6. Raffle was held and meeting adjourned at 8:28.

Eddie Keister, Secretary

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the May 12, 2010 meeting was \$3,287.81. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$88.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

Coming Programs 2010		
June 9 th	Sherri Patton	Memphis Riots of 1866
July 14 th	Nancy Samuelson	Reconstruction
Aug. 11 th	Jim Stanbery	The Cracker Line
Sept. 8 th	Tom Lubas	Kansas/Missouri Border Wars
Oct. 13 th	Ray Cosyn	Lincoln's Funeral Train

A Report On The 12th Annual Gibson Ranch Re-Enactment

By George W. Foxworth

The National Civil War Association (NCWA) continued its 2010 re-enactment season on May 14-16 at historic Gibson Ranch in Elverta, California. The theme was "Experience The Underground Railroad." The NCWA is a private non-profit organization that uses "living history" to help the public to better understand the American Civil War. By portraying the manner in which the soldiers and civilians lived, worked, fought, and died during the Civil War era, the NCWA hopes to keep alive the spirit and sacrifice made by the men, women, and children of that time.

Gibson Ranch is a Sacramento County Park with rolling and grassy hills that allows excellent views of the battlefield and camps. The site accommodated the camps, horses, cannons, soldiers, civilians, and other attendees. In addition, the slight slope of the hillside gave an excellent view of the entire battlefield.

On May 14th, Friday, the NCWA and Gibson Ranch hosted approximately 1,700 students from Sacramento area schools. The Sacramento Civil War Round Table (SCWRT) served as tour guides for the school children. On May 15th and 16th, the SCWRT hosted an event booth.

The following SCWRT members participated with the school children: Kris Amerine, Roy Bishop, Fred Elenbaas, George W. Foxworth, Bob Hanley, Don Hayden, Chuck Hubbard, Wayne Henley, Dennis Kohlmann, Kim Grace Long, John Nevins, Paul Ruud, Don Schatzel, Silver Williams, Ed Sims, and Maxine Wollen. In addition, the following SCWRT members worked in the SCWRT booth: Rose Browne, Fred Elenbaas, George W. Foxworth, Don Hayden, Edie Keister, John Nevins, Richard Sickert, Silver Williams, and John Zasso. Also, Pam Hubbard and Brad Schall attended. From the Elk Grove CWRT, Tim and Ginny Karlberg attended. Charles Christian attended from the North Bay CWRT. Finally, a special thank you to Pattie Spencer from the San Joaquin Valley CWRT who participated with us on the school children program and she also worked in the SCWRT booth. Many thanks to all volunteers and attendees.

On Saturday, Larry Tagg gave a talk on "The Unpopular Mr. Lincoln." On Sunday, SCWRT member Bob Hanley gave an educational talk on "Francis C. Barlow: The Boy General." The talks were excellent and well-received by the public.

The conditions were dry and pleasant, in other words, excellent.

The 2010 Gibson Ranch event was a complete success and the NCWA and Gibson Ranch are commended for their great work. We look ahead to the 2011 event and we hope that Gibson Ranch is still open.

George Gordon Meade and the War in the East—By Ethan S. Rafuse

This splendid little book (171 pages, published 2003) is a well-written, carefully referenced examination of the strategy followed by—strike that: imposed on—the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War, and the relations between General Meade, the non-political consummate professional, and other generals in this hapless, but eventually victorious, army. Ethan Rafuse is a professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He previously taught at the University of Missouri and at West Point. I particularly enjoyed his *McClellan's War* (2005), a balanced, objective biography of one of the Union's most criticized generals.

Mr. Rafuse repeatedly reminds the reader that Meade, Grant, and McClellan (and almost all the West Point generals) were correct in advocating the James River as a base of operations in attacking Richmond. He writes, "By the fall of 1862, however, the inability and/or unwillingness of the Northern public and politicians to see military realities the way Meade and other West Pointers did induced the Lincoln administration to decide that the Army of the Potomac could no longer use the James. The consequences of this decision were defeats at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville...For Grant, the cost of following the Lincoln administration's operational wishes in 1864 before he could operate from the James was a butcher's bill so large that it would do inestimable damage to his reputation as a general."

Indeed, in January, 1864, Grant replied to Halleck's inquiry as to his preferred strategy, asking "whether an abandonment of all previously attempted lines to Richmond is not advisable, and in lieu of those one be taken farther south." He suggested that the Army of the Potomac not seek battle with Lee on the overland route between Washington and Richmond, but proposed that 60,000 men from Meade's army sail to Suffolk, Virginia and target the railroads in North Carolina and Virginia that connected Lee's army to the rest of the Confederacy. Grant predicted this would "draw the enemy from campaigns that are of their own choosing, and for which they are prepared....[and] virtually force an evacuation of Virginia." Mr. Rafuse adds, "The suggestion that the Federal army attempt anything that resembled McClellan's Peninsula Campaign evidently so disturbed Halleck that he was unable or unwilling to grasp Grant's point that a force of 60,000 men in North Carolina would cripple Lee's logistics and render him incapable of conducting a major operation north of the Potomac." Meade totally agreed with Grant, which is one reason they got along well, with Meade willing to subordinate himself to Grant's command. In a letter to his wife, Meade wrote of Grant, "Take him all in all, he is in my judgment, the best man the war has yet produced."

Mr. Rafuse obviously hasn't attempted to write a full biography of Meade, but he includes enough anecdotes told by colleagues and excerpts from his letters to give the reader a feeling for this good soldier, who "ended the war as the fourth-ranking major general in the U.S. Army." There are several humorous examples of the temper and profanity of the "Old Snapping Turtle", and lots of Meade's grumbling and grouching, usually directed at General Phil Sheridan.

"Meade's bitterness was further exacerbated when, after the 1864 election, the War Department selected Sheridan to fill the major-general vacancy in the regular army

created when McClellan resigned his commission. Although pleased to see Sheridan rewarded for his services, Grant shared the distress of Meade's staff...and decided to go to Washington to personally lobby for Meade's promotion...which Grant had been pushing for since May....Thanks to a vigorous lobbying effort by Grant, on February 2 the Senate finally confirmed Meade's promotion."

I enjoyed the 24 one-page vignettes of generals associated with the Army of the Potomac. Much of this is familiar, but I certainly didn't know much about George McCall and John G. Parke. Of course you know that Gen. Daniel Butterfield composed "Taps," but did you know that he was the son of the founder of the Overland Mail Company, aka the Butterfield Stage? Or that Horatio Wright, commander of the VI Corps, was one of the engineers who helped build the Brooklyn Bridge and the Washington Monument?

This book is sold in the bookstore at the Gettysburg National Military Park. Inexplicably, the store doesn't carry two outstanding Gettysburg books which they certainly should. One is Kent M. Brown's recent *Retreat From Gettysburg*, the best book on that subject. The other, also by Mr. Brown, is *Cushing of Gettysburg* (1993; University of Kentucky Press). I'm told that Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing will be awarded the Medal of Honor later this year. Perhaps the store will stock this excellent biography of a true American hero. (My copy is a recent edition, so I assume it's still in print.) Maybe the Licensed Battlefield Guides who read my essays will nudge the store manager.

Mr. Rafuse's military background and his writing skills combine to produce a clear description of Union and Confederate strategy at the significant battles involving Meade, including Antietam, Chancellorsville, Petersburg, and the controversial pursuit after Gettysburg. The book isn't for the general reader, but Civil War students will enjoy every aspect of this useful work.

Book review by M. Wolf

"A Vast And Fiendish Plot" :The Confederate Attack On New York City By Clint Johnson

If the book title, "The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight" hadn't been used already, it would be perfect for this tale of intrigue. Seriously, though, as Mr. Johnson points out, only the ineptitude of these bumbling averted a major conflagration and loss of life in a crowded city. On the evening of November 25, 1864, six Confederate Secret Service operatives tried to set simultaneous fires in nineteen New York hotels (there's a good street map showing the location of each hotel), but failed. The klutzes didn't realize that their liquid Greek fire (a mixture of "sulfur, pitch, dissolved niter, naphtha, and petroleum") needed oxygen to be effective, and they didn't open the windows and doors of the hotel rooms. Damage was minimal, no one was injured (except one of the plotters whose neck was broken by a Union Army rope at Fort Lafayette in Brooklyn, following a secret trial by military commission), and this fiasco passed into history, largely forgotten by most people.

This is a good story, and Clint Johnson (author of "The Pursuit" [2008], about the chase, capture, imprisonment and legal wrangling leading to the release of Jefferson Davis, which I recently reviewed) tells it well. He's done a lot of research in primary sources, such as rosters of Kentucky regiments, and he begins some sentences with, "If Headley's book is to be believed...." John Headley, one of the conspirators, wrote a detailed memoir in 1906; how accurate is it? Who knows? Mr. Johnson shows

discrepancies between Headley's memoir and the documentary evidence. He points out what facts are known, and what mysteries will never be known.

The first third of this book (2010; already in paperback) provides an excellent account of New York's evolution to one of the North's most pro-Southern cities by 1861. Mr. Johnson notes that "New York City was one of the first colonies to accept Africans as slaves at the same time that Jamestown, Virginia, was treating Africans as indentured servants who would one day be free." The slave revolts of 1712 and 1741 are discussed, as is New York's active participation in the illegal slave trade. "Between January, 1859 and August, 1860, at least 85 slaving voyages originated from New York, transporting between 30,000 and 60,000 slaves from Africa to Cuba." (See "Hanging Captain Gordon," by Ron Soodalter [2006], which I reviewed two years ago. This is the account of a slave ship captain tried, convicted, and executed by the US government in New York in 1862.) This is followed by a cursory overview of the Civil War, with a description of the Confederate Secret Service, and why they wanted revenge for the depredations of Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, of Sherman in Georgia, and for the still-controversial 1864 Dahlgren raid, with its alleged aim of assassinating Jefferson Davis. This is hard to do in 75 pages, but the general reader, to whom it's directed, will find it rewarding.

Once the story of the plot, hatched in Montreal, gets going, it's a corker. Those familiar with New York will appreciate being told exactly what happened where, in enough detail to make it come to life, but without becoming tedious to New Yorkers or aliens. There are brief, interesting discourses on lighting a city with gas, fighting fires, and the "luxuries" of big city hotels. (Some had elevators!) November 25 used to be Evacuation Day, a major holiday in New York, celebrating the day in 1783 that the British finally withdrew their troops from the United States. There were parades, fireworks, speeches, banquets, concerts, etc. Evacuation Day was supplanted by Thanksgiving as our November holiday, and fizzled out completely during the First World War, when it wasn't nice to celebrate the humiliation of our former enemy, now our ally fighting the Kaiser. Sadly, no one remembers it today.

The rebels had selected Election Day, November 8, for their "vast and fiendish plot to burn down our Empire City" (*New York Herald*), but General Benjamin Butler had arrived with 3500 troops to keep order, and even these morons realized that it wasn't the best time to set fires. I e-mailed Mr. Johnson, asking if they had chosen Nov. 25 because it was a holiday, and he said that he found no evidence of this. (He didn't know that Nov. 25 was Evacuation Day, but said that he'd look into it. He invited me to his book talk at the NY City Bar Association on June 24.) Speaking of the Empire City (a name I never heard before), Mr. Johnson writes that New York's nickname was "The Emerald City," at the time of the Civil War.

There's another book on this subject, "The Man Who Tried to Burn New York" (Nat Brandt, 1986), but this book is much better. Since the plot didn't turn out to be a tragedy, Mr. Johnson is able to tell the story with a light touch, but it's still serious history. There aren't nearly enough end notes, and I asked him about this. He replied that he wanted more notes, but the publisher (Citadel Press) insisted that, since this is a book for the general reader, too many notes would be inappropriate. (Huh?) He said, "This was an argument I lost." General reader or Civil War student, I'm sure you'll enjoy the book as much as I did. **Book review by M. Wolf**

The 26th Annual West Coast Civil War Conference

BLOOD ON THE RAMPARTS: CIVIL WAR COASTAL DEFENSES

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12 TO SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2010

Greetings Civil War Enthusiasts,

The 2010 West Coast Civil War Conference, sponsored by the San Francisco Civil War Round Table and by Friends of Civil War Alcatraz, will be held November 12-14 at the San Francisco War Memorial Veterans' Building. The War Memorial site is located at 401 Van Ness Street in San Francisco (next door to the San Francisco Opera House).

The 2010 conference theme is "Blood on the Ramparts—Civil War Coastal Defenses." We are very fortunate to have an outstanding list of speakers, including James McPherson, Craig Symonds, Richard Hatcher, John Martini and Jim Stanberry. Their collective Civil War backgrounds will give you insight into the changing approaches and effectiveness of coastal defense efforts during the war, including those around San Francisco Bay. Speaker presentations will take place at the War Memorial Building on Friday evening, November 12, and all day Saturday, November 13. Sunday, November 14, will be devoted to guided tours of Alcatraz Island, Fort Mason, the Presidio and Fort Point.

Registration fees: \$179 prior to October 1st; \$199 after October 1st

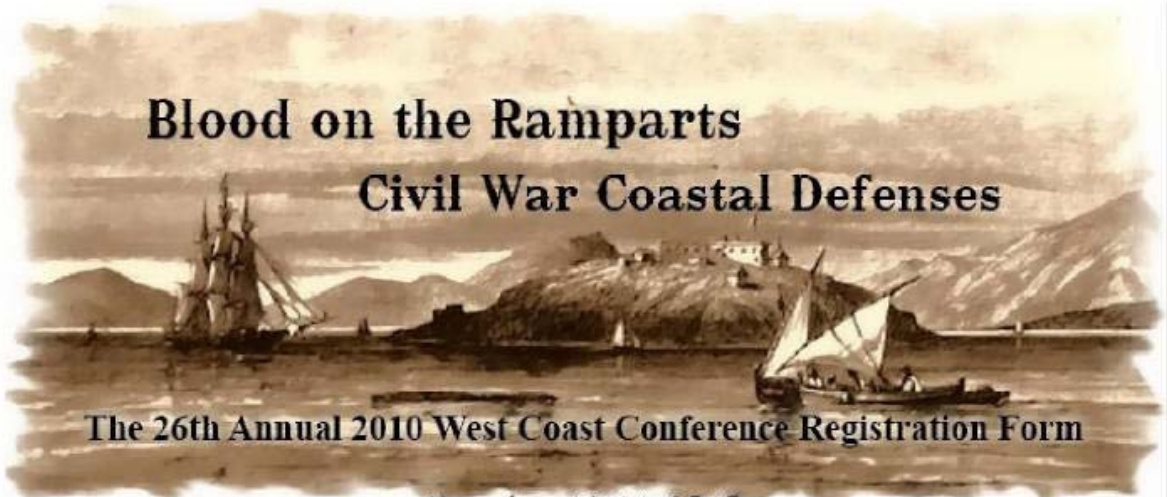
For more information, please visit <www.friendsofcivilwaralcatraz.org> and click on "Conference." You will also find lodging and parking information on the website. If you are unable to access information online you may contact Fred Bohmfalk at (916)-965-4776.

See you in San Francisco!

Fred Bohmfalk Co-Chairman

Gary Yee Co-Chairman

Blood on the Ramparts Civil War Coastal Defenses



The 26th Annual 2010 West Coast Conference Registration Form

November 12-14, 2010

War Memorial Building, 401 Van Ness, San Francisco, CA 94102
Across the street from San Francisco City Hall

The registration fee of \$199 includes dinner and lecture on Friday; lunch, dinner, and a full day of lectures on Saturday; and on Sunday, transportation from Alcatraz to Fort Point, the Presidio and Fort Mason, including a box lunch.

Register early - prior to October 1, 2010 - and get the reduced rate of \$179.

Name: _____ Guest: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ For confirmation and special announcements

Friday only (includes dinner) - Nov. 12	\$75 ___	Guest meals Friday \$40 ___
Saturday (lunch, dinner and lectures) Nov. 13	\$100 ___	Guest lunch Saturday \$15; dinner \$30 ___
Sunday (activities, bus, box lunch) Nov. 14	\$35 ___	No guest meals on Sunday
Sunday only	\$50 ___	
All three days	\$199 ___	

Check here if you are attending Sunday ___ We need this information for bus reservations.

Make checks for the days you will be attending payable to:

FOCWA or West Coast Civil War Conference

Send registration form and check to:
Brad Schall, Treasurer, FOCWA
P.O. Box 983, Lincoln, CA 95648