



**Volume 47, No 10
October, 2007
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**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://sacramentoewrt.com/>



President's Message:

The only thing missing was the popcorn! What a treat! Thanks to Ron Perisho for an informative and entertaining evening. Had everyone worn 3D glasses sometime in the past? I bet not, but now you have. There was an overflow crowd, everyone was happy – what a night!

There is a brief announcement elsewhere in this Battle Cry that we will elect our 2008 officers at the next evening meeting. The current board of officers has agreed to serve for another year for which I am very grateful. They are very diligent – always attend meetings, are active and helpful in roundtable governance and to top it off, they know a lot about the Civil War. Are there better credentials than that? Additional nominations for officers may be made from the floor at the evening meeting. There is one requirement – the person you nominate, if elected, must have agreed to serve.

The final roll of the dice for the 2007 West Coast Civil War Conference has not been made, or has it? The Las Vegas volunteer persists in his announcement that there will be a conference in Las Vegas, Nov 9-11, with interesting speakers, etc. However, his own time lines for providing all the details continue to pass in silence. Meanwhile, our friends in Fresno continue their planning for a one day conference on Nov 3rd, with a “meet the speakers” social hour on Friday evening, Nov 2nd. I am planning to go to Fresno.

It is with great sadness that I pass along news of the September 13th death of long time member Rudy Schafer. Our condolences to Natalie and the family.

The lights have been burning late into the evening at the Schall residence. Why you ask? Brad has been polishing his presentation on the Battle of Fair Oaks or maybe it is Seven Pines. See you at the Hofbrau on the 10th – come early and stay late!

**Paul Ruud
President**

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the September 12, 2007 meeting was \$2,045.11. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$106.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
SEPTEMBER 12, 2007
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO

Attendance-47

Members-40

Paul Ruud, President
Dennis Kohlman, Vice-President
George Foxworth, Treasurer
Edie Keister, Secretary
Joan Beitzel
George Beitzel
Ken Berna
Roy Bishop
Terry Bowen
Carol Breiter
Lydia Donaldson
William Donaldson
Brad Friedman

Alan Geiken
Kyle Glasson
Bob Hanley
Scottie Hayden
Don Hayden
Nancy Hayden
Scott Hayden
Pam Hubbard
Chuck Hubbard
Lowell Lardie
Victor Le
Grace Long
Jim Middleton

Vivian Miller
Betty Mitchell
Maurice Mitchell
John Nevins
Horst Penning
Kathy Perisho
Ron Perisho
Brad Schall
Richard Sickert
James Taff
Drew Van Winkle
Robert Williams
Susan Williams
John Zasso

Guests-7

Dudley Albrecht
Sebastian Nelson
Anne Rohwer
Bob Rohwer
Nicholas Scivoletto
Kris Scivoletto
Alexandra Stehl

1. Meeting started at 7:00. President Ruud welcomed members and guest, and spoke a little on Archibald Gracey- a Confederate General. Member John Nevins gave an update on the Las Vegas Convention- "How did they do that? The how and why of the Civil War." to be held Nov 9-10-11. The model of the Hunley will be there and speakers will possibly include James Hunter and Craig Simms. The Fresno CWRT will hold a one day convention, Nov 3, if the Las Vegas program doesn't happen.
2. Member Don Hayden had petitions to sign for Congress concerning Civil War Preservation funds. Member Brad Schall told of the passing of Jim Brazilton in Modesto and also passed around applications for new members for Friends of Alcatraz. He also told us of the GAR in Chicago will be voting on historical sites.
3. Member Ron Perisho presented "Stereo images of the Civil War." With the big screen and special 3-D glasses, we were taken back in time. Ron also shared original stereo cards and a camera from the 1870's. Thanks Ron, for sharing your knowledge and all your photos-(119!)- it was fascinating.
4. Raffle was held and meeting ended at 8:15

Edie Keister
Secretary

Coming Programs 2007		
Date	Speaker	Topic
October 10 th	Brad Schall	Battle of Fair Oaks
Nov. 14 th	Katrina Worley	Home Spun Uniforms-The Real Story
Dec. 12 th	Maurice Mitchell	“Fire in the Rear”
January 9 th	Susan Williams	War Horses
February 13 th	Sebastian Nelson	Capt Henry Green, Calif. Infantry
March 12 th	George Beitzel	The Rubber Room

The following is the announcement for the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table’s (SJVCWRT) November 3, 2007, mini-Conference.

LAS VEGAS OR FRESNO?

The failure of the Las Vegas Civil War Round Table to provide any information about “their” Conference on November 9-11, 2007 is very perplexing. Dr. David Davenport (SJVCWRT Vice President) contacted Steve Bogdan, the Conference chairperson, during the first week of August and was told that detailed information would be sent out within a week. When nothing materialized, Dr. Davenport notified Mr. Bogdan that the SJVCWRT would consider the Las Vegas offer withdrawn if Mr. Bogdan did not respond by September 10. Mr. Bogdan again declined to respond.

As such, the Executive Board of the SJVCWRT decided to host a one-day “mini” Conference on Saturday, November 3, 2007. The SJVCWRT has taken this action to ensure that the annual nature of the West Coast Conference of Civil War Round Tables continue, since they are committed to hosting the Conference in 2008. The 2008 Conference theme will be “The War in the Shenandoah Valley.” Among the presenters will be Jeffrey Wert, Robert K. Krick, Robert E. L. Krick, Jim Stanbury, and David Davenport.

“The Army of Tennessee” is the theme of the one day Conference on Saturday, November 3, 2007. Among the speakers will be Jim Stanbury, Brad Schall, David Davenport, Evan Jones, and another unknown speaker from the East Coast.

November 3 is one week after the annual re-enactment at Kearney Park so we will advertise there and hopefully attract a number of registrants whose appetites for the Civil War are wetted there. Spread the word about this one-day Conference to anyone with a day in which to learn about the Confederacy’s most important army in the Western Theater.

This one-day Conference is tentatively scheduled to be held at North West Church in Fresno at the corner of West and Barstow Avenues. The cost of the Conference will depend on what it costs the SJVCWRT to bring the speaker from the East Coast and the cost of providing lunch and dinner. Please check their web site “SJVCWRT.ORG regularly for updates.

2008 Election – SCWRT Officers

In accordance with the SCWRT By-Laws, we will be electing the officers to lead our Roundtable during 2008 at our next meeting. The current board offers a slate of candidates for your consideration and vote. These members have agreed to serve in their nominated positions. Prior to the vote at our October 10th evening meeting, **you will have the opportunity to nominate other candidates from the floor.** The only stipulation is that the person nominated must have agreed to serve if elected.

The board's candidate slate: **President**, Paul Ruud; **Vice President**, Dennis Kohlmann; **Secretary**, Edie Keister; **Treasurer**, George Foxworth; **Battle Cry Editor**, Jim Middleton; **Immediate Past President**, Don Hayden; **Members at Large**, Bob Williams and Bob Hanley. Our current **web master** is not a member, she is a consultant to the board, but is not an elected officer.

New York Times 1863 THE REBEL PIRATES.

IRON CLADS IN THE MERSEY ;

From the Manchester Examiner, Sept. 1.

While the Confederate prospects are ruined on the Mississippi, and overcast on the Rappahannock, they seem to be brightening on the Mersey. Experience, which is said to make even fools wise, has probably gone for something with Mr. LAIRD. He is aware that the trick by which the *Alabama* got safely out of port cannot be repeated, and the legal proceedings in the case of the *Alexandria* have shown him the points which need to be most carefully guarded in an attempt to evade the law. It is quite certain that Mr. LAIRD is *not* building vessels of war for the Confederate Government. Of course not. Mr. LAIRD knows how to conduct his business without the risk of being caught in an illegal transaction. It may be illegal for A to build vessels for E, but, if so, all you have to do is to thrust in B, a perfectly upright and honest character, who will be at no loss for opportunities to hand over the vessel to E. If one go-between is not enough, thrust in C and D, and legal detection will become exceedingly difficult. It will obviously help to make the matter more intricate if the go-between is a foreigner; and if, in addition to his being a foreigner, he is also a foreign Consul, interference will become impossible. The facts admitted are in perfect harmony with this system of operations. The Emancipation Society declares that Mr. LAIRD is building a couple of ironclad vessels for the Confederate Government. Mr. LAIRD is indeed building two vessels of this description, but they are building "on French account." To substantiate this explanation of their origin, and have the French flag flying over them, so that to interfere with them would be to offer umbrage to our Imperial ally. Mr. LAIRD is said to "make no mystery" about these vessels, and there is no need for him to make any, for the mystery confronts us ready-made. The vessels, though built on "French account," have Turkish or perhaps Algerian names—the *El Tousson* and the *El Maursar*. The former will be ready for sea in a month, the latter will take perhaps a couple of months longer. "Two more formidable ships were never found."

Civil War Era Aeronautics

Both the Union and Confederate armies used balloons for intelligence gathering during the Civil War, marking the first time that balloons were used by the United States for military purposes. Aeronaut John Wise was the first to receive orders to build a balloon for the Union army. However, that balloon never was used because it escaped its tethers and was shot down to prevent it from falling into Confederate hands. Balloons were not then new, however; the first manned flight occurred in Paris in 1783, witnessed by Benjamin Franklin, who was in town at the time to negotiate the peace treaty with England. When asked, "What value is it?" His response was, "What value is a new born baby?" adding that he thought the thing might have some military uses.

Aeronauts Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, 1831-1913, (called "Professor" because of his knowledge and research into chemistry and meteorology, notwithstanding his limited formal education); and John LaMountain, 1830-70, both carried out reconnaissance activities for the Union army during the War. Lowe had foreseen the usefulness of balloon observations when he had accidentally landed in South Carolina on a flight from Cincinnati, Ohio, to the Atlantic Ocean in April 1861. One of his financial supporters, M. Halstead, editor of the Cincinnati Daily Commercial, wrote to U.S. Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase and suggested that the United States establish a balloon corps under Lowe's command. This corps would provide aerial reconnoitering for the Union armies.

Nineteenth Century balloons were filled with either hot air or hydrogen, both dangerous operations; hydrogen because it was highly flammable, and hot air because it required coal or wood-fueled fire in the basket below the balloon to heat the air to fill the enclosure. Without great care this open flame

embers and ashes could set a balloon's rope enclosure and/or fabric on fire (Knowledge of Hydrogen dated back to the 1600's, but nonflammable Helium gas had not been discovered (detected) until the 1870's, nor economically extracted until 1920±). (Remember the 1938 *Hindenburg* disaster?)

Secretary Chase arranged a meeting between Lowe and President Lincoln for 11 June 1861. On 17 July 1861, Lowe demonstrated his ideas for balloon reconnaissance and also for sending telegrams from the balloon to the commanders below. He used the *Enterprise*, attached to tethers and floating 500 feet above Washington, D.C. Lincoln was duly impressed, and later that summer established the Balloon Corps, a civilian organization under the authority of the army's Corps of Topographical Engineers, which granted Lowe permission to requisition equipment and personnel. Lowe was designated Chief Aeronaut, with the equivalent rank of colonel, although he remained a civilian. One or more of his balloons was to be rigged with telegraph wires so that he could send messages and serve as a "forward" artillery observer.

Lowe received funds to build a balloon on 2 August 1861. The first U.S. balloon designed for military use, the *Union*, was ready for action on 28 August. Because he was forced to inflate the balloon with gas from municipal lines in Washington, D.C (he had not yet received funds for a portable hydrogen generator, a device to induce a chemical action by pouring sulfuric acid over iron filings), the balloon could not be moved far, which limited operations to the Washington, DC, area.

On 24 September 1861, Lowe ascended to more than 1,000 feet near Arlington, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, DC, and began telegraphing intelligence on the Confederate troops located at Falls Church, Virginia, more than three miles away. Union guns were aimed and fired

accurately at the Confederate troops without actually being able to see them, a first in the history of warfare.

This accomplishment led the then Secretary of War Simon Cameron to direct Lowe to build four additional balloons. Two more followed shortly. The fleet now consisted of the *Intrepid*, *Constitution*, *United States*, *Washington*, *Eagle*, *Excelsior*, and the original *Union*. The balloons ranged in size from 32,000 cubic feet down to 15,000 cubic feet. Each had enough cable to climb 5,000 feet.

At the same time, fellow aeronaut John LaMountain was also attempting to provide balloon services for the Union. He wrote to Secretary Cameron in 1861, but, because he had no influential backers, LaMountain did not receive a reply. However, the commander of the Union Forces at Fort Monroe, MG Ben Butler, contacted him and asked for a demonstration. Using the *Atlantic*, which he had used to attempt to reach the Atlantic Ocean earlier, he made two successful ascents at Fort Monroe in July 1861. The New York Times reported that LaMountain could view the Confederate encampments beyond New Market Bridge, Virginia, and also at the James River north of Newport News. LaMountain had actually made the first aerial reconnaissance of the Civil War and also was the first to gather intelligence by free balloon flight rather than from a tethered balloon.

LaMountain, however, did not have the Union Army behind him, and he had difficulty obtaining equipment. He managed to obtain another balloon, the *Saratoga*. That balloon, however, was lost on 16 November 1861. He tried to get some of Lowe's equipment, but Lowe refused to cooperate. Each man found supporters, and the rivalry between the two grew. Finally, after accusations and hostilities on both sides, on 19 February 1862, General McClellan dismissed LaMountain from any further service to the military.

Lowe continued providing tactical reports to the Union troops. He provided information during the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, and in late April 1863, at Fredericksburg, he transmitted hourly reports on Confederate movements. During the battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, Lowe had continually transmitted information on enemy troop positions. Observations made during this battle proved to be crucial to the Union victory.

The presence of the balloons forced the Confederates to conceal their forces. To avoid detection, they blacked out their camps after dark and also created dummy encampments and gun emplacements, all of which took valuable time and personnel. However, the balloon corps did not last until the end of the war. General George McClellan was relieved of his command in 1863, and Captain Cyrus Comstock, who was assigned to oversee the balloon corps, cut its funding and thus its effectiveness. Lowe was also accused of financial impropriety, and his pay was reduced. Lowe resigned from the balloon corps on 8 May 1863. By August 1863, the corps had disbanded. But during its short life span, some 3000 ascensions had been made.

As well as aerial reconnaissance and telegraphy, Lowe and LaMountain also introduced the use of aircraft carriers. Lowe directed the construction in 1861 of the first aircraft carrier, *G.W.P. Custis*, a rebuilt coal barge with a flight deck superstructure. On one occasion, she towed one of Lowe's balloons for 13 miles at an altitude of 1,000 feet while Lowe made continuous observations. On 3 August 1861, LaMountain used the deck of the small vessel *Fanny* to launch an observation balloon 2,000 feet over the James River. He used the Union tugboat *Adriatic* for the same purpose. Word of the Americans' achievements reached Europe, where the Prussian army sent Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin to learn what he could from this new kind of warfare.

Some historians claim that, although balloon observations contributed to battle victories, the Union Army's commanding generals did not use the balloon observations advantageously. Vague reports on R. E. Lee's movements issued from the hydrogen balloon *Intrepid* during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign apparently served only to panic General McClellan. The general withdrew his vastly superior forces and positioned them seven miles from Richmond, Virginia, rather than attacking the sparsely defended Confederate capital and possibly ending the war three years and tens of thousands of lives sooner. After McClellan, Pope, Burnside, and Hooker were relieved of command; U. S. Grant became overall army commander and reoriented the mission of the Army of the Potomac then under Meade. Preferring to rely more on rebel attrition than on intelligence, he disbanded the Balloon Corps.

The Confederate Army also formed a smaller version of the balloon corps. In the spring of 1862, Captain John Bryan offered to oversee the building and deployment of an observation balloon. This balloon consisted of a cotton envelope coated with varnish. Unlike the hydrogen-filled Union balloons, it was filled with hot air because the Confederacy did not have the equipment for generating hydrogen in the field. Bryan launched the balloon on 13 April 1862, over Yorktown, Virginia. Even though the balloon was rotating on its single tether while aloft, Bryan managed to sketch a map of Union positions. On his next flight, Bryan ended up in free flight after the tether was cut to free an entangled ground crew member. He was fired upon by Confederate troops below who thought he was the enemy, but managed to escape and land safely.

The second Rebel balloon was constructed of multi-colored silk, which gave rise to the legend that this balloon was made from silk dresses donated by the ladies of the Confederacy. Although the "Silk Dress

Balloon" was constructed from dress silk, no actual dresses were sacrificed. This balloon was gas-filled in Richmond, Virginia, and transported to the field by tethering it to a locomotive. In 1862, when the battle area moved too far from the railroad, it was attached to a tugboat and carried down the James River where the tug, unfortunately, ran aground and was captured. Another "Silk Dress Balloon" was constructed and went into service at Richmond in the fall of 1862. It provided aerial observations from its post until the summer of 1863 when it escaped in a high wind and was captured by Union troops.

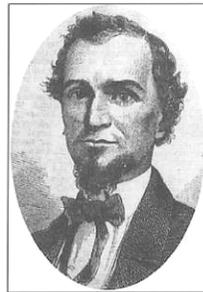
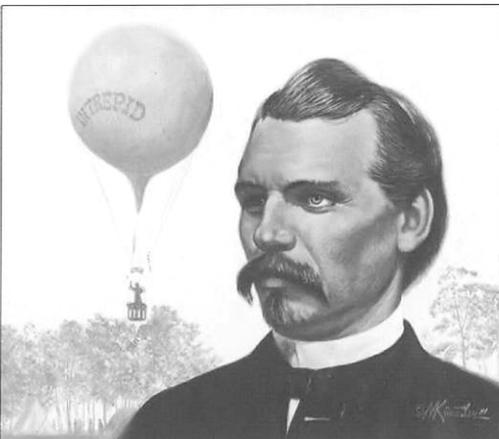
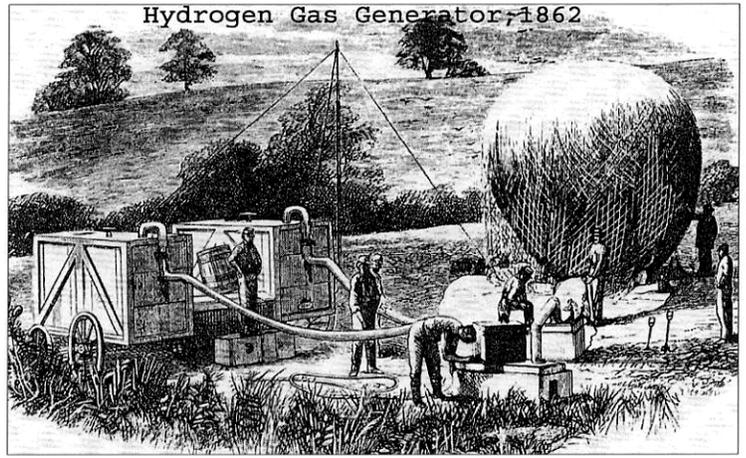
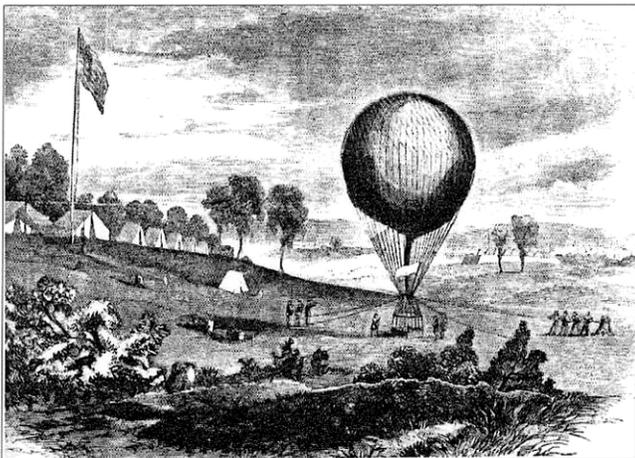
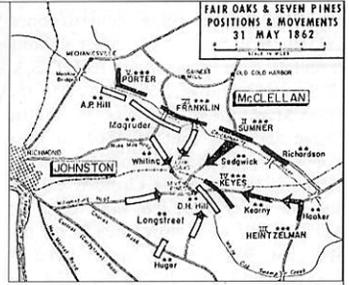
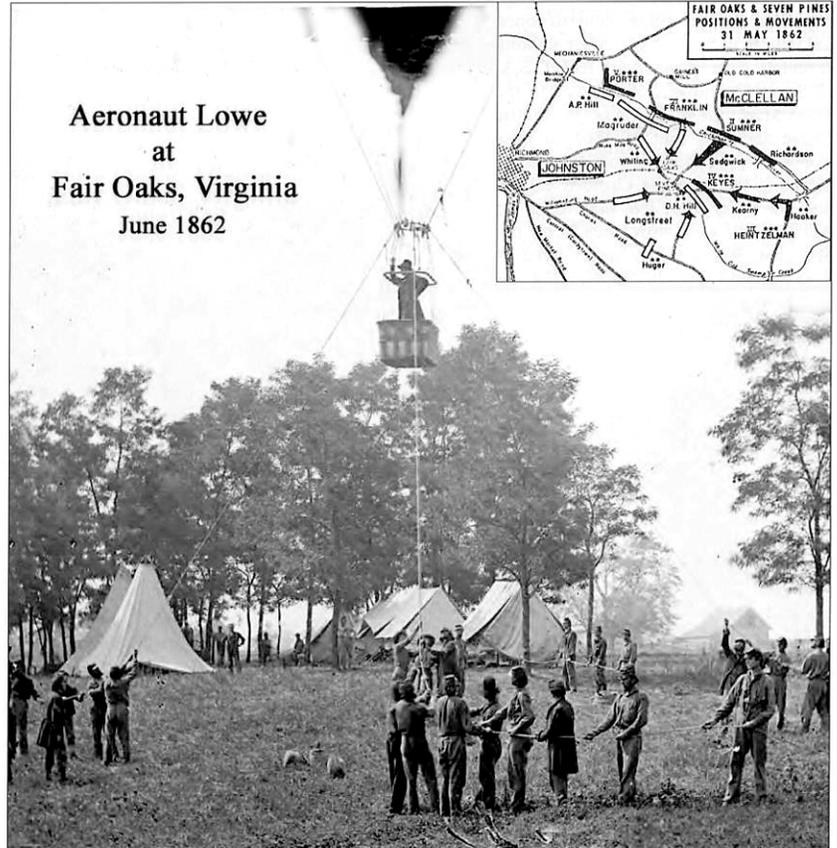
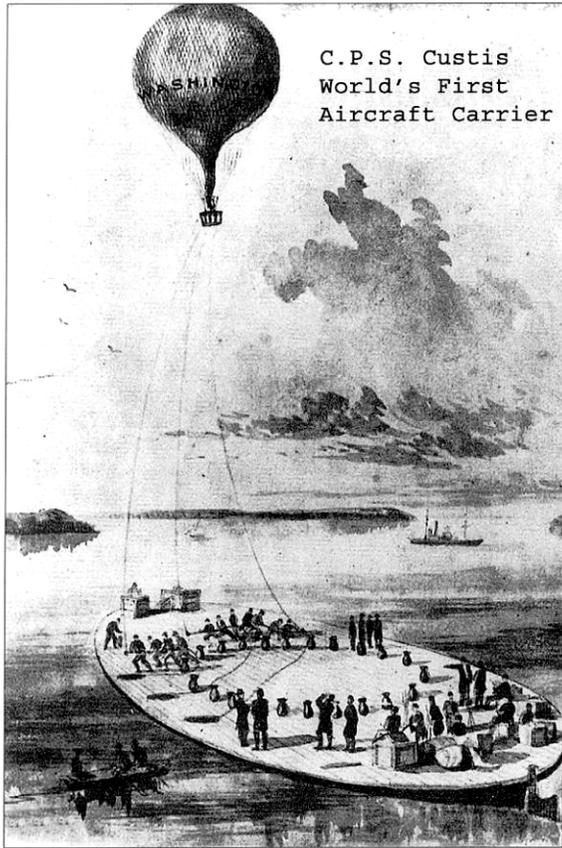
In later years of T.S.C. Lowe's long life, he turned to new inventions and enterprises. He invented an ice making machine and a new process for making gas for fuel; the patents for which made him very wealthy. In 1886, he moved to Pasadena, CA where he built a luxurious mansion and an electric-operated cable railway system. Pasadena's Lowe Mountain and the Lowe Observatory were named after him, and he was a founder of the California Institute of Technology. In 1891, he witnessed the reestablishing of a Balloon Department under the U.S. Army Signal Corps; and in 1911, the first military use of heavier than air flying machines, the air plane. Although the lineage is somewhat oblique, it might, nevertheless be said, without too much of a stretch that Lowe was also a founder of the U. S. Air Force. He died in 1913.

References:

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Bob Williams: 9-21-07

Civil War Era Aeronautics Graphics Page



Wise

LaMountain

Lowe, 1861

Lowe, 1890

RAW: 9-21-07