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December, 2010
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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
P.O. BOX 254702
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President's Message:

Many thanks to Ray Vaughan for his detailed presentation of the 1862 Battle of Pea Ridge. We are blessed to have members of other Round Tables who share their knowledge and travel significant distances to enlighten us. Ray is a member of the San Joaquin Civil War Round Table which has hosted two of the past three annual conferences.

The 2010 conference in San Francisco was quite successful. In addition to talks from Craig Symonds and James McPherson, Rick Hatcher covered Charleston's coastal defense history since Colonial days, John Martini detailed Bay Area fortifications, and Jim Stanbery discussed amphibious operations in the Civil War. Sunday's program included visits to Alcatraz and Forts Mason and Point. Congratulations to Friends of Civil War Alcatraz and San Francisco Civil War Round Table for presenting an informative program.

At its last meeting, our board decided to purchase a digital projector for speakers who present power point programs. Currently, member Nancy Hayden has been making Sutter Hospital's Neonatal Department projector available to us, but it is time we have our own. Thanks is due to Mrs. Hayden for her assistance the past several years. In addition, the board has decided to assist The California Military Museum in their fund raising efforts by donating one hundred-fifty dollars for which our organization will be recognized by a plaque.

Wednesday December 8th is our next meeting and we will celebrate with a cake and ice cream party and a talk by our own Bob Hanley who will tell us about Lincoln's early years. Don't miss it. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Don Hayden, President

MINUTES
Sacramento Civil War Round Table
November 10, 2010
Hof Brau Restaurant, 2500 Watt Ave, Sacramento

Attendance-35

Members-29

Don Hayden, President
Silver Williams, Vice President
George Foxworth, Treasurer
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Rick Peasley

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Paul Ruud, IPP
Nancy Samuelson
Nicholas Scivoletto
Richard Sickert, MAL
Bob Williams
John Zasso

Guest - 6

James Cress
Gail Cretcher
Keith Cretcher
Joseph Meyer
Robert Schroeder
Ron Vaughn

1. Meeting started at 7:05. Guest were introduced and welcomed. Former secretary Walt Bittle has a book- "Political Cartoons." To get an autographed copy for \$15, see Silver Williams. President Hayden thanked Jim Middleton for his many years of service as Battle Cry editor.
2. Guest Joseph Meyer provided information on the American Civil War Game Club, an organization for internet computer games. If interested, please call (916) 332-1199.
3. President Hayden discussed a recent article in the *Sacramento Bee* on former congressman Doug Ose's attempt to obtain a 50-year operating lease of Gibson Ranch. The issue will again come before the Sacramento County Supervisors in December. If Mr. Ose is successful, future re-enactments and other events would continue at Gibson Ranch.
4. The Board voted to buy a projector for future presentations.
5. Our speaker Ron Vaughn, a Civil War expert, teacher, and re-enactor, and SJVCWRT member, presented "Trans Mississippi Campaigns- Pea Ridge," also known as Elkhorn Tavern. His presentation included maps, slides, and a list of combatant leaders and companies for the Union and Confederate sides. Thanks Ron.
6. On display was a board created by Members Dennis Kohlmann and Bob Hanley for November's 2011 West Coast Conference in San Francisco.
7. Auction was held and meeting adjourned at 8:39.

Edie Keister
Secretary

November Treasure's Report

The cash balance following the November 10, 2010 meeting was \$3,053.60. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$45.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and The Underground Railroad in New York City. By Graham Russell Gao Hodges. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, c. 2010. Pp. 280.)

David Ruggles (1810-1849) is barely remembered today, even among people familiar with the pre-war abolition movement and the Underground Railroad in New York. This is sad, because in his short life, suffering from chronic ill health (including blindness) and racial oppression, he was an influential fighter. He was a leader of New York's black opposition to slavery and discrimination with his pen, his printing press, and in the courts – usually before corrupt and racially hostile judges.

Graham Hodges is a professor of history at Colgate University. He has written and edited more than a dozen books; this is one of the John Hope Franklin Series in African-American History, published by the University of North Carolina Press (2010). Professor Hodges, as one would expect from an academic, has drawn on varied sources, and his book has copious end notes and good illustrations.

We have seen many books, especially in this sesquicentennial year, about America on the eve of the Civil War. We have read about New York City's dependence on the cotton trade, its warm hospitality to southerners (especially their money), and its cold shoulder toward African-American civil rights. This book is about New York on the afternoon before the Civil War, in the 1830s and early 1840s.

David Ruggles was the first person in New York to provide shelter and guidance to the escaped Maryland slave, Frederick Augustus Bailey, who soon re-invented himself as Frederick Douglass. At 2 a.m. on Sept 3, 1838, Bailey arrived in New York. He had to beware of slave catchers, and saw in "every white man an enemy and in every colored man cause for distrust." He spent the night

sleeping among barrels on the dock. "He had planned to find a black man named David Ruggles, who headed the New York Committee of Vigilance, an organization famous among enslaved people fleeing from their bondage." Bailey soon sent for his fiancée, and they were married that month in Ruggles' home at 36 Lispenard Street (which remains in good condition). The couple moved to New Bedford, MA, where he found work as a caulker, and changed his name, adopting Douglass from Sir Walter Scott's poem, "*Lady of the Lake*."

Historians may have ignored Ruggles, but Douglass never forgot his benefactor. (W.E.B. Du Bois doesn't mention Ruggles in his list of "heroes of color" in his classic work of 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk*). In his first autobiography (1845), Douglass recalled Ruggles' "vigilance, kindness, and perseverance." His last autobiography (1882) again notes Ruggles' contributions to Douglass and the cause of African-American freedom.

The strength of this book is in its vivid description of the harsh conditions endured by people of color every day, especially in the supposedly progressive states of New York and Massachusetts. Professor Hodges writes, "Generally, New York City was unsafe for blacks." In 1830, blacks numbered 14,000 in a population of 200,000. "Their percentage of the total had dropped sharply since the initiation of gradual emancipation in 1799, largely because of declining economic opportunity and worsening racism..." Few blacks could vote in New York State because the revised constitution of 1821 imposed a \$250 property qualification for black voters. (This was sustained in an 1860 statewide referendum by a vote of almost 2:1, with even more opposition in New York City.) "Job discrimination was rampant...Blacks were not allowed to ride on the city's ubiquitous horse-drawn omnibuses, forcing them to walk everywhere. There was no sanctuary in church, where Protestant denominations routinely

restricted blacks to 'Negro pews' far from the pulpit."

Beyond these economic and social indignities lurked a far worse danger: slave-catchers and kidnapers. "Enabled by sympathetic judges in New York, kidnapers regularly came to the city and grabbed any black whose appearance resembled their quarry." This "quarry" included children and free men and women. Even blacks would turn in "their brethren." Ruggles fought long and hard against the kidnapers, and won as many battles as he lost.

Professor Hodges terms Ruggles "among the most militant" of the black abolitionists in the antebellum period. He relates several instances where Ruggles was ejected from segregated railroad trains in Massachusetts. On July 6, 1841, he was traveling from New Bedford to Boston, when he refused to move to the "colored" car. "After an argument...several white men dragged Ruggles from the white car and threw him off the train...Angrily, Ruggles brought suit against his assailants for assault and battery." He lost in court, but his published report of the incident, *Lynching In New Bedford*, "galvanized the anti-slavery movement around New England." There had been reports of incidents over segregated seating for years, but it was Ruggles who aroused public opinion. The Boston *Times* demanded that the judge in Ruggles' unsuccessful suit "have his ears cropped." Ruggles headed a mass meeting in New Bedford in July, where William Lloyd Garrison offered a resolution. Frederick Douglass led a procession of speakers at a Meeting of Colored Citizens to protest Ruggles' treatment by the railroad and the court. Douglass learned first-hand of the segregated policy of the railroads when he

was beaten by a "whole posse of brakemen, baggagemen, &ct" for refusing to sit in the Jim Crow car. In late September of 1841, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, "a light-skinned black woman...was dragged out of the 'whites only' car with a baby in her arms. The child was badly injured, as was her husband, who tried to help her.

Over the next two years, petitions to the legislature attacking the railroads' policies finally influenced the legislature. Though the state lawmakers did not take any real action, threats of regulation meant that gradually the railroads dropped their policies...Because of David Ruggles' courageous example, blacks in Massachusetts could, by late 1843, sit where they pleased on such common carriers." (In 1854, future President Chester A. Arthur represented a young black woman in her suit against a New York omnibus company which had denied her equal access, and won. However, by 1860, most of New York's omnibuses were still segregated.)

These stories, and the determination of Ruggles and others, are what kept me reading this book to the end. It's well-written, but I wish that Professor Hodges had better narrative skills, like historians Doris Goodwin and David McCulloch. (I call this a *Dagnet* book: "Just the facts, ma'am.") As a New Yorker, this aspect of the city's history has always drawn my interest. The casual reader, with many books on the "to be read" shelf, might find this biography, though set in turbulent times, less absorbing than I did. *My new e-mail address is mcyberfloss@gmail.com*

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A Report On The 21st Annual Civil War Reenactment At Kearney Park

by George W. Foxworth

The Fresno Historical Society (FHS) sponsored their 21st Annual Re-Enactment on October 1-3 at Historic Kearney Park in Fresno, California. The theme was the campaign of General Stonewall Jackson in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

The FHS was established in 1919 to collect, compile, and preserve all written or other records of historical value to California generally or Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley in particular. Their beginnings are tied to pioneer families some of whom immigrated to the Valley prior to the Gold Rush in 1848, others who came after California became a State and helped establish the town of Millerton in the 1850s, and still others who came after the railroad was built in the early 1870s.

On October 1st (Friday), the FHS hosted hundreds of students from Fresno area schools for a living history demonstration. The re-enactments were Saturday and Sunday. The participants were the American Civil War Association (ACWA), American Civil War Society (ACWS), Civil War Re-Enactment Society (CWRS), Comstock Civil War Re-Enactors (CCWR), Fort Tejon Historical Association (FTHA), National Civil War Association (NCWA), and Re-Enactors of the American Civil War (RACW). Dr. Izabella Hunt-Jones from Reno, Nevada was the narrator for the battles each day. In addition, it was hot, humid, and a few showers in the Fresno area Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Attending from the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table (CWRT) were Rob Ashby, Dr. Brian and Linda Clague, Dr. David Davenport, Evan Jones, Neil and Bev Kuykendall, Michelle Millicent, Lisa Peters, Tom and Sharon Rosedahl, Jonathan Schulze, Walt Schulze, Pattie Spencer, and Ron and Linda Vaughn. From the Elk Grove CWRT, Tim and Ginny Karlberg attended. From the Sacramento CWRT, the attendees were John Zasso and George W. Foxworth.

One of the highlights was the presentations by Dr. Brian Clague and Dr. Robert Peters on "Medicine During the Civil War Era." Their presentations were well-received and attended by standing-room only crowds in a hot tent on both days.

Another highlight was Company "H" from the 10th Cavalry Regiment of Buffalo Soldiers from Southern California. The men, their horses, and the Black women with them in period dress were a big hit. They also had a blacksmith who made horse shoes.

Finally, at the end on Sunday, there was a big raffle of Civil War DVDs and books and each participant was given a raffle ticket.

The event was a complete success and the Fresno Historical Society and re-enactors are commended for their great work. In addition, special thanks and recognition is due to Mr. Charlie Henry (known to most as General Stonewall Jackson) for his excellent work in organizing and coordinating the event. We look ahead to the 22nd Annual Re-Enactment at Kearney Park.

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26th Annual West Coast Civil War Round Table Conference
 San Francisco *Random Pictures* November 2010



26th Annual West Coast Civil War Round Table Conference
 San Francisco *Major Speakers* November 2010

