



# **SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

## **South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes February 26, 2019**

**Meeting Location:** Holder's Country Inn – Cupertino, CA

### **Special Activities & Events:**

#### **2019 CWRT Congress**

- Date: September 20-22, 2019
- Where: Missouri Civil War Museum at Jefferson Barracks  
222 Worth Road - St. Louis, Missouri 63125
- Hosting Organization: Civil War Round Table of St Louis  
P. O. Box 220982 - Kirkwood, Missouri 63122  
Email: [stlcwrt@gmail.com](mailto:stlcwrt@gmail.com)
- Event Link: <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/upcoming-events.html>

#### **Wings of History Museum Open House**

- Date: May 18, 2019
- Location: 2777 Murphy Avenue - San Martin CA 95046
- Theme: Aviation Day at San Martin
- Event Link: <https://www.wingsofhistory.org/>

### **Officer Reports**

#### **President**

##### **Civil War in the News**

#### **Vandals Damage Statue**

- Vandals in North Carolina damaged the statue of General William C. Lee thinking it was the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee
- William C. Lee, is often described as the father of the U.S. Army's airborne infantry; he served in World War II as the first commanding general for the 101st Airborne Division and helped plan the Allied forces' D-Day invasion of Normandy

#### **Vice President**

No Report

(Continued on back side)

### **Treasurer**

- Bank Account: \$3,079
- Marilyn Comstock asked the membership in attendance to recognize the contributions to the SBCWRT by Gary Campagna and Tom Roza

### **Secretary**

- Distributed January meeting minutes
- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About the Causes for the Civil War Other Than Slavery?
- \$46 collected for book raffle
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 18

### **Preservation**

The American Battlefield Trust is requesting donations to purchase a plot of land as part of the Battle of Franklin, TN

### **Historian**

Vacant

### **Other Topics (By Abby Eller)**

#### **This Day in the Civil War: January 29th**

- **1861**: Confederate President Jefferson Davis received a message from South Carolina Governor Pickens declaring that the Union Ft Sumter in Charleston Harbor must be taken “to preserve safety and honor.”
- **1862**: Ironclad Monitor left New York under sealed orders; Confederate Congress authorized President Davis to suspend writ of habeas corpus; Davis declared martial law in Norfolk and Portsmouth, VA
- **1863**: Skirmish in Germantown, VA; General Longstreet takes command of troops in Confederate Department of Virginia & North Carolina
- **1864**: Skirmish near Catoosa, GA; Federal prisoners arrive at Camp Sumter Prison (aka Andersonville)
- **1865**: As ordered by General Grant, Philip Sheridan sends 10,000 cavalry troops commanded by General Wesley Merritt to destroy the Virginia Central Railroads and the James Rive Canal and then capture Lynchburg, VA; skirmish occurs at Spring Place, GA

(Continued on next page)

## **Person of the Month: Edmund McIlhenny**

### **How important was salt during the Civil War?**

- In the 19th century, the only reliable ways to preserve food were pickling, smoking, and salting. (Canning was NOT reliable)
- Before animal hides could be made into leather, they first had to be salted to prevent rotting
- The only ways to disinfect wounds were to pour on alcohol, or rub in salt. Painful, but at least there was a chance of recovery
- During the Civil War, whenever Union forces captured Southern saltworks, they promptly destroyed them
- When the Confederate draft was declared in April 1862, salt makers were one of the exempt occupations.

### **Edmund McIlhenny - Early Beginnings**

- In 1841, Edmund McIlhenny of Maryland arrived in New Orleans
- Starting as a bookkeeper, by 1857 he was a wealthy banker.
- Befriended Judge Daniel Avery, who owned Petite Anse, an island in the Louisiana bayou country
- McIlhenny married Judge Avery's daughter Mary Eliza; at the outbreak of the Civil War, the McIlhenny-Avery family moved to Petite Anse, hoping to sit out the war, sheltered in the bayou.

### **Salt Business**

- Petite Anse was atop a gigantic dome of remarkably pure rock salt; McIlhenny and Avery received many offers to buy the salt; and a lot of money was made selling salt during the war
- When Union forces approached Petite Anse, the McIlhenny-Avery family fled to Texas, returning to their island at war's end
- Unfortunately, the money they'd made selling salt was Confederate money, and there were few employment opportunities so McIlhenny had to come up with another line of work

### **Mexican Hot Chili Peppers Business**

- It's unclear how McIlhenny obtained Mexican hot chili peppers, or just how he managed to come up with the product he made with them
- McIlhenny cultivated the peppers on Petite Anse, now renamed Avery Island, and determined exactly the right time to harvest them
- Producing a hot pepper sauce by fermenting the crushed peppers in salt, straining the mash, and adding vinegar
- The resulting sauce was sold in small cologne bottles and was so successful, in 1870 McIlhenny patented it
- McIlhenny named his sauce after the Mexican state renowned for hot chili peppers: Tabasco sauce

(Continued on back side)

### **February Presentation**

Speaker: Mike MacDonald

Topic: Civil War Swords

### **March Presentation**

Speaker: Tom Roza

Topic: Comparing the Root Causes for the Revolutionary War and the Civil War

### **April Presentation**

Speaker: Nick Adams

Topic: A Civil War Story of the Family Left Behind