



# SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

## South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes February 25, 2020

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

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

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual CWRT Congress 2020**

When: September 18-20, 2020

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Note: Early Bird Reservations begin February 10th. Those Registrants today will receive a 10% discount. **SAVE THE DATE!!**

#### **Society for Women & the Civil War**

When: July 24-26, 2020

Location: Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Note: For more information about the conference and to register, visit [www.SWCW.org](http://www.SWCW.org)

### **Officer Reports**

#### **President**

#### **Research Topics**

- Alan Sissenwein: Donald L. Miller's Vicksburg: Grant's Campaign That Broke the Confederacy; recent publication that is well researched and written; Alan will provide a review of the book at a future meeting

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

- Kentucky archaeology dig shows Civil War soldiers dyed their hair
- Camp Nelson National Monument; located south of Lexington, Kentucky
- Archaeologists excavating part of Camp Nelson known as the sutlers' or merchants' area in 2015 found remnants of a 150-year-old photography studio, the first ever found at any Civil War site.
- Also discovered hair dye bottles used by Union soldiers
- URL: <https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/jessamine-county/article237745444.html#storylink=cpy>

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## **Books**

- Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth by Kevin M. Levin
- More than 150 years after the end of the Civil War, scores of websites, articles, and organizations repeat claims that anywhere between 500 and 100,000 free and enslaved African Americans fought willingly as soldiers in the Confederate army.
- Kevin M. Levin argues in this carefully researched book, such claims would have shocked anyone who served in the army during the war itself
- Levin explains that imprecise contemporary accounts, poorly understood primary-source material, and other misrepresentations helped fuel the rise of the black Confederate myth.

## **Vice President**

No Report

## **Treasurer**

- Bank Account: Approximately \$3,247
- | <u>Credits</u>   | <u>Debits</u>     |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Jan Raffle: \$47 | Speaker Fee: \$50 |

## **Secretary**

- Distributed January meeting minutes
- Civil War Quiz: "What Do You Know About President Andrew Johnson's Impeachment Trial of 1868?"  
\$41 collected for book raffle
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 15

## **Preservation**

No Report

## **Historian**

Vacant

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## **This Day in the Civil War: January 28 (By Abby Eller)**

**1861:** In Raleigh NC, by a majority of 651 votes, the state rejects a convention on secession. In eastern TN, the request for a similar convention is rejected by a majority of 10,000 votes

**1862:** On the Miss River, Genl John Pope moves his forces down the west bank of the river towards New Madrid MO . The main Confederate bastion on the river here, Island No 10, is the target of Federal gunboats

**1863:** Inflation continues to plague the Confederacy. Reports from Charleston SC state a half-pound loaf of bread costs \$25 and a barrel of flour \$60. In Georgia, the USS Montauk destroys blockade runner Rattlesnake, which had run aground near Ft McAllister on the Ogeechee River

**1864:** In Georgia, Genl George Thomas sends Union troops in a failed attack on Confederate positions at Buzzards Roost.

**1865:** In GA, Sherman's columns temporarily halt due to bad weather while Sherman's bummers become a problem by plundering not only civilians, but also horses, mules and food from Sherman's army

## **Person of the Month: Lincoln as Legalist (By Abby Eller)**

### **Introduction**

- Abraham Lincoln was Commander in Chief of the Union armies, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, wrote the Gettysburg address, was the first Republican President, and the first to be assassinated.
- Most people are familiar with these aspects of Abraham Lincoln. The core conviction that guided him was Lincoln as legalist, firmly believing that the rule of law was vital to America's survival.

### **The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions**

- 1830's America saw much mob violence; in Alton IL, a proslavery mob murdered abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy for publishing an abolitionist newspaper while also throwing his printing press into the river.
- Lincoln was an up and coming lawyer in Springfield IL and in Jan 1838, spoke at the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield on "*The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions.*" Here are some excerpts:
  - In the great journal of things happening under the sun, we find ourselves under the government of a system of political institutions, conducing more to the ends of civil and religious liberty, than any of which the history of former times tells us
  - We have found ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the establishment of them-they are a legacy bequeathed us by a brave, patriotic race of ancestors

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- This political edifice of liberty and equal rights tis ours to transmit to the latest generation. This task of gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves, and duty to posterity, all require us faithfully to perform.
- How then, shall we perform it? At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean, and crush us? Never!
- At what point, then, is danger to be expected? I answer, it must spring up amongst us. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author. There is, even now, something of ill omen amongst us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country, the growing disposition to substitute the worse than savage mobs, in place of the sober judgment of courts. Accounts of outrages committed by mobs form the everyday news of the times.
- Now Lincoln asked, What has this to do with the perpetuation of our political institutions? I answer, It has much to do with it. The innocent, alike with the guilty, fall victims to the ravages of mob law. And all this is not the full extent of the evil.
- By such examples, by instances of the perpetrators going unpunished, the lawless in spirit are now encouraged to become lawless in practice. With no dread of punishment, they become absolutely unrestrained.
- On the other hand, those who abide by the laws, seeing their property destroyed and their lives endangered, and nothing that forebodes a change for the better, become disgusted with a government that offers them no protection.
- Thus then, the strongest bulwark of any government may effectually be broken down and destroyed-I mean, the attachment of the people.
- Whenever the vicious portion of our population shall be free to gather in bands, and throw printing presses into rivers, and hang or burn persons at pleasure with impunity, depend on it, our government cannot last.
- The feelings of the best citizens will become alienated from it. At such a time, men will seize the opportunity to overturn that fair fabric, which for the last half century, has been the fondest hope of lovers of freedom.
- I know the American people are much attached to their government. Yet if the laws continue to be disregarded, if their rights to be secure in their persons and property are held by no better tenure than the caprice of a mob, the alienation of their affections from the government must come.

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- In any case that arises, for instance the promulgation of abolitionism, either something is right, and therefore deserves the protection of law. Or if it is wrong, it is therefore proper to be prohibited by legal enactments. In neither case is mob law justifiable.

### **Other Topics**

None

### **February Presentation**

Speaker: Tom McMahon

Topic: Religion and Barbarism in the Civil War

### **March Presentation**

Speaker: Kristin Patterson

Topic: United States Tax Stamps Used to Raise Funds for the Civil War

### **April Presentation**

Speaker: Victoria Kinnear

Topic: “Challenges of One Man Trying to Reinstate His Pension”