



South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes September 30, 2020

Meeting Location: Online via ZOOM Meeting Application

Special Activities & Events:

4th Annual CWRT Congress 2020

Cancelled Due to Coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic

Officer Reports

President

Club Business

- Suspend matching donations for Preservation; use the funds to purchase a new computer for use by SBCWRT members

Presentations: Differing Viewpoints Topics

#2: If the Battle of Antietam had been a draw with both armies still in the field, would England and France have recognized the CSA?

YES: TBD NO: TBD

Date: TBD

#3: If Lee had dissolved his Army to link up with other Confederate forces, and not surrendered, would the war have continued in a long partisan warfare struggle?

YES: TBD; NO: Tom McMahon

Date: TBD

#4: If the newly formed Confederate government had chosen to immediately export as much cotton as possible, instead of withholding it from European markets, could the Confederacy have prevailed?

YES: TBD; NO: TBD

Date: TBD

#5: Some believe that the South had the better military leaders. Do you agree or disagree, and why?

YES: TBD; NO: TBD

Date: TBD

#6: If Lee had been killed by a sniper when scouting Union positions prior to the 2nd Battle of Bull Run, would that have been a positive or negative for the Confederacy

YES: TBD; NO: TBD

Date: TBD

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- Bank Account: Approximately \$3,135

Secretary

- August meeting minutes posted on SBCWRT web site
- Civil War Quiz: What Happened During the Month of September 1861-1865
- Book Raffle: N/A
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 15

Preservation

No Report

Historian

Vacant

This Day in the Civil War: September 29th (By Abby Eller)

1861: Brigadier General Daniel H Hill of the Confederate Army is ordered to North Carolina, as it is feared there will be Federal action there. There's skirmishing at Hopkinsville Ky, Travisville TN. and Berlin, MD

1862: Confederate Army of West Tennessee, 22 thousand strong under the command of General Van Dorn, marches out of Riply, MS heading towards Corinth Mississippi. There is skirmishing near New Haven Kentucky.

1863: President Lincoln addresses The Sons of Temperance declaring, "I think that the reasonable men of the world have long since agreed that intemperance (that is, excessive drinking) is one of the greatest, if not the very greatest of all evils amongst mankind." There is skirmishing at Stirling's Plantation Louisiana and Leesburg Tennessee.

1864: General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry engages a Federal force near Lynchburg, TN; Light fighting by both sides. Confederate Navy Acting Master John C Braine seizes the US steamer Roanoke as the Roanoke leaves the harbor of Havana, Cuba. This is a major embarrassment for the

Confederate government, because the Roanoke has been seized while departing from a neutral port, thereby violating Cuba's neutrality.

Person of the Month: Charles Sumner (By Abby Eller)

Introduction

- Civil War histories usually dwell in some detail on events that intensified the sectional conflict that led to war:
 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act that sparked "Bleeding Kansas"
 - John Brown's failed attempt to start a slave uprising
 - Supreme Court Dred Scott decision that made slavery legal
- But the caning of Charles Sumner on the floor of the US Senate usually gets only passing mention. But at that time, the near fatal beating of Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts by Preston Brooks of South Carolina, Southerners gave hearty approval of what Brooks did; this fanned the flames of sectional conflict that would soon erupt in war.
- Charles Sumner was born and raised in Boston, MA; his ancestors had settled in New England in the 1630's

Background

- As a student at Harvard, he found he had a talent for public speaking. In 1831 he enrolled in Harvard Law School, and in 1834 was admitted to the bar; his law practice, in partnership with fellow Harvard graduate George Hillard, was modestly successful
- Social improvement was widespread in mid-19th century New England. In the 1840's, Sumner embraced social reform as his life calling; became an advocate for school reform, prison reform, and international peace.
- In 1845, the mayor of Boston invited Sumner to deliver the oration at the city's 4th of July celebration which brought Sumner widespread public attention; he caused much controversy when he denounced the annexation of Texas and furthermore denounced all wars as immoral
- The speech set a pattern in Sumner's life for years to come; people either loved or hated him, but he couldn't be ignored.
- Sumner joined the Whig party. In Massachusetts, the Whigs opposed extending slavery to Federal territories or any new states

Entrance into Politics

- He left the Whig party when the Whigs nominated slaveholder Zachary Taylor to run for President in 1848. Sumner then joined the Free Soil party, and in 1851 was elected to the US Senate on the Free Soil ticket. He had no prior experience at holding public office.

- Sumner was elected to the Senate in the hopes of furthering the antislavery cause in the Senate, much as John Quincy Adams had done in the House of Representatives
- In August 1852, Sumner's first antislavery motion as Senator moved to prohibit any appropriation of Federal money to pay for carrying out the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850
- Declared that in appeasing slave power, the nation had betrayed the ideals of the Declaration of Independence
- The conflict between slave and free states could never be settled by compromising; "Nothing can ever be settled, which is not right!"; for this and other antislavery statements, Sumner received death threats, but he walked unarmed about Washington, saying "I am here to do my duty and shall continue to do it, without regards to personal consequences."
- In May 1856 in the US Senate chamber, Charles Sumner delivered the most consequential speech of his life, "The Crime Against Kansas"
Assaulted in Senate Chambers
- Defended the admission of Kansas as a free state, but then went on to hold up the slave states and several of his Southern enemies to ridicule and insult, including Senator Butler of South Carolina who was absent
- Sumner likened Butler to the deluded character of the would be Spanish knight Don Quixote, whose mistress "though ugly to others, is always lovely to him...the harlot SLAVERY!"
- Senator Butler was the uncle of Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina; fiercely loyal to the Southern code of honor, this obliged him to avenge this insult to his family member and his native state
- Brooks also fervently hated abolitionists. He regarded Sumner as a social inferior who should be punished by beating.
- Brooks encountered Sumner in the Senate chamber, after the Senate had adjourned for the day. Sumner was seated at his desk, franking copies of "The Crime Against Kansas."
- Brooks politely introduced himself, declared Sumner's speech "a libel" then raised his walking cane, and with lightning speed rained down blows on Sumner's head and shoulders; Brooks beat Sumner with all his strength even after the cane broke
- Those still in the building rushed into the chamber; Senator Crittenden of Kentucky shouted "Don't kill him!" which got Brooks to stop. It would take Sumner many months to recover.
- Arrested and then freed on \$500 bail, Preston Brooks became an overnight celebrity hero in the South; Southern fire eaters were now inspired to step up their own threats against other Northern antislavery leaders; the Richmond Virginia Enquirer proclaimed "These vulgar abolitionists must be lashed into submission!"

- The very few criticisms of Brooks' s actions were not of his attack, but the way he went about it. The Wilmington North Carolina Herald chided, "The Senate chamber is not the arena for exhibitions of this character."
- The North was outraged. Hundreds wrote letters to Sumner offering their sympathy. Northern cities and towns held meetings to protest the assault; prayers for Sumner's recovery were offered in church services. Over a million copies of "The Crime Against Kansas" were sold.
- Northerners might be taken aback by the strong language in Sumner's speech, or even dislike Sumner personally, but they were unanimous in their condemnation of Brooks' brutality; Ralph Waldo Emerson, New England's leading light, asked "What else could one expect from a man who was a product of the Southern slave system?"
- After bitter argument, the House of Representatives voted to expel Congressman Brooks from office, but the vote failed to pass; Brooks was convicted of assault with only a \$300 fine. He was re-elected to the House in a landslide election.

Post Assault

- Sumner was also easily re-elected to the Senate. While he recovered, Massachusetts regarded his vacant seat in the Senate chamber as a silent rebuke to those who would violently punish exercise of antislavery free speech, and then be celebrated by the slave power for their brutality.
- The Free Soil party, Northern Whigs and even some Northern Democrats now joined forces to form the Republican party, whose central plank was stopping the spread of slavery and setting it on the road to extinction
- It's not a stretch to say, that the consequences of the attack suffered by Senator Charles Sumner, helped get Republican party candidate Abraham Lincoln elected as President in 1860.

Other Topics

None

September Presentation – Differing Views

Speaker: Tom Roza and Jim Rhetta

Topic: If Jackson was at Gettysburg, would the CSA have won the battle?

October Presentation

Speaker: Tom Roza

Topic: The Presidential Election of 1864

November Presentation

Speaker: Alan S and Jim R

Topic: Good and Bad Civil War Generals