



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes June 25, 2019

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

Special Activities & Events:

Annual SBCWRT Picnic

- Sept 21 1pm-4pm - Marilyn Comstock Residence
- 6574 Crystal Springs Drive San Jose, CA 95120
- Costs:
 - Picnic: \$20/person
 - Annual Dues: \$20/Individual; \$35/Couple
- RSVP Tom Roza (Email: tomroza@earthlink.net; Tel #: 408-376-0566)

2019 West Coast Civil War Conference

- Date: November 8-10, 2019
- Location: Crowne Plaza Sacramento Northeast, 5321 Date Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95841-2512
- Theme: Civil War Leadership: The Strategy, Tactics, and Politics of a Country Torn Asunder
- Event Link: <https://www.savasbeatie.com/savas-beatie-blog/2019-west-coast-civil-war-conference-in-sacramento-featuring-two-major-savas-beatie-authors/>

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Officer Reports

President

Civil War in the News

- City of Fredericksburg, VA recently removed an old slave auction block that was used for the sale of slaves

Research

- One of the members recently visited the City of Atlanta, GA and visited the refurbished Cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta fought in 1864

- Also, visited the home of Margaret Mitchell and viewed a movie on the making of the film, “Gone With the wind”

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Vice President

None Report

Treasurer

- Bank Account: \$2982

Secretary

- Distributed May meeting minutes
- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About These Civil War Authors and Historians?
- \$61 collected for book raffle
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 22

Preservation

No Report

Historian

Vacant

This Day in the Civil War: June 25th (By Abby Eller)

1861: Mathias Point VA, Confederate batteries attacked by Union gunboats

1862: Seven Days campaign begins. At Oak Grove, Confederate Genl John Magruder conducts operations calculated to fool the Union forces into believing the Confederates have a larger force than they actually do.

1863: Jefferson Davis implores Genls Braxton Bragg & Beauregard to send reinforcements to Genl Johnston at Vicksburg to stop Grant’s siege of the city. Jeb Stuart’s cavalry raid on Army of the Potomac’s supply line captures 125 supply wagons/400 prisoners. This daring feat removes Stuart’s cavalry from vicinity of Gettysburg and discovery of the approaching Union forces.

1864: Grant approves, without enthusiasm, a plan by mining engineer Col Henry Pleasants to dig a tunnel under the Confederate forces at Petersburg, then fill this with powder, and blow up the Confederate fortifications.

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Person of the Month: Edward Bates (By Abby Eller)

Background

- After distinguished career of public service to Missouri, enjoyed retirement as a gentleman farmer living on the outskirts of St Louis
- A former slaveholder, had long since freed his slaves. Foresaw conflict between North and South over slavery would tear the country apart.
- Took position that slavery must not spread and should be eliminated
- Bates became Free Soiler then Republican believing Democratic Party was a danger to the country's future
- Republican Party founder Francis Blair Sr, invited Bates to seek the Republican Presidential nomination in 1860 - Bates agreed
- Once Lincoln was nominated as the Republican Presidential candidate, Bates worked to support Lincoln's candidacy
- A talented conciliator, helped maintain Republican Party unity to deny the Presidency to the Democrats in 1860.
- Bates accepted Lincoln's offer to serve as Attorney General

Civil War

- Atty Genl's job is to advise the President as to legality of executive decisions and argue in defense of government actions
- Bates's working relationship with Lincoln was excellent. A peacemaker by nature, Bates toned down the impact of Secty of War Stanton's bad temper, Treasury Secty Chase's frustration at not winning the Presidency, and Secty of State Seward's inclinations to palace intrigues.
- Lincoln suspended writ of habeas corpus when mob in Baltimore threatened Union troops; Supreme Court Justice Roger Taney maintained only Congress could suspend habeas corpus
- Bates upheld suspension: "in a time like the present, when the very existence of the nation is assailed by a great and dangerous insurrection, the President has the lawful and discretionary power to arrest and hold in custody persons known to have criminal intercourse with the insurgents."
- In early 1862, when McClellan refused to share plans with Lincoln, Bates argued that the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, has Constitutional right to know any and all of his generals' plans.

In 1864 Bates delivered legal opinion regarding black soldiers' unequal pay: "Persons of color" performing the same duties as white soldiers were legally entitled to the same pay, bounties, and uniform allowance.

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- The Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision had declared that persons of color had never been and could never be, US citizens. Bates argued successfully that place of birth automatically conferred citizenship, which could not then be denied for any reason. Bates cited legal precedents going all the way back to ancient Greece and Rome in his argument.
- When Lincoln was reelected, Bates resigned believing Confederacy would be defeated & there were 4 more years of a Republican President.
- James Speed replaced Bates as Atty Genl. Speed, like Lincoln, supported a Constitutional amendment to abolish slavery.

Other Topics

Book Auction

- Book provided by San Mateo County History Museum: "Echo of a Distant Drum: Winslow Homer and the Civil War" containing complete works of Winslow Homer during the Civil War
- Published in 1986 on 150th anniversary of birth of Winslow Homer; is likely only complete collection of paintings and sketches of Winslow Homer devoted to Civil War subjects
- Book on display at SBCWRT meetings in July & August
- Will be an auction item at Sept 14, 2019 annual SBCWRT picnic; proceeds split between SBCWRT & San Mateo County History Museum

June Presentation

Speaker: Bill Yenne

Topic: Tom Custer in the Civil War

July Presentation

Speaker: Bob Burch

Topic: California: Military Operations Out of State

August Presentation

Speaker: Jim Rhetta & Tom Roza

Topic: How to Write a Book