



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes August 27, 2019

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

Special Activities & Events:

Annual SBCWRT Picnic

- Sept 14 1pm-4pm - Marilyn Comstock Residence
- 6574 Crystal Springs Drive San Jose, CA 95120
- Costs:
 - Picnic: \$10/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/>

Officer Reports

President

Civil War in the News

Books

- **The Yankee Plague: Escaped Union Prisoners and the Collapse of the Confederacy** by Lorien Foote
- Late 1864, Confederacy shifted thousands of prisoners out of the path the Union armies; during these transfers about 3,000 escaped.

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- Using letters, diaries, official reports, and more, Lorien Foote documents how the flight of these men, aided and at times by Unionist civilians, fugitive slaves, and even Confederate deserters, contributed to the collapse of order on the Home Front in the Carolinas.
- Although just trying to get back to Union lines, their presence and actions disturbed the local populace, often disrupting agricultural and industrial activity, and forced the diversion of scarce troops from the armies in an attempt to maintain order.

Donation to Holder's Waitress

- In recognition of Holder's Waitress Peggy who provides support at SBCWRT monthly meetings and has cancer, awarded Peggy a check in the amount of \$100

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

Bank Account: No Report

Annual Picnic: See Special Activities & Events

Secretary

- Distributed July meeting minutes
- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About Civil War Battlefield Preservation & National Cemeteries?
- \$20 collected for book raffle
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 12

Preservation

No Report

Historian

Vacant

This Day in the Civil War: August 27th (By Abby Eller)

1861: Confederate batteries fail to prevent Union takeover of Cape Hatteras North Carolina. Takeover of this strategic point on Hatteras Inlet gives Union advantage preventing blockade runners from landing their cargos.

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1862: During 2nd Bull Run campaign, Genl Hooker's troops rout Confederates at Kettle Run, VA. There is also fighting at Bull Run Bridge and Buckland Bridge. Meanwhile, Genl Pope inexplicably pulls back his troops from formerly held positions along the Rappahannock River.

1863: In the wake of Quantrill's terrorist raid on Lawrence, KS, Federal commander in Kansas City issues misguided and ineffective order directing civilians in the area to leave their homes. About 20,000 people have already been left homeless after Quantrill's destruction of homes and crops.

1864: In the closing stage of the Atlanta campaign, Sherman pulls two corps out of their trenches around the city. Confederates think Sherman is retreating; actually, his forces are moving to choke off the last rail lines into the city of Atlanta.

Person of the Month: Father Augustine Tolton (By Abby Eller)

Background

- Augustine Tolton was born a slave in Missouri in 1854. His family was owned by Stephen and Savilla Elliott, devout Catholics. Savilla stood as godmother at infant Augustine's baptism.
- There are two different stories how Augustine's family made it to Illinois and freedom during the Civil War:
 1. Elliott family descendants maintain at the outbreak of the war, Stephen Elliott freed his slaves and urged them to move North
- Tolton family escaped to Illinois with help from Union soldiers; many months before Emancipation Proclamation, Union forces were enabling thousands of slaves to escape
- Augustine's family settled in Quincy, IL and Augustine attended Catholic school. Some Catholic parents objected to a black child in their school, but Father Peter McGirr, an immigrant Irish priest, held firm.
- Augustine applied for admission to every seminary in the US, but was rejected by all of them on account of his race.
- Father McGirr enabled Augustine to study for the priesthood in Rome where he was ordained a priest on Holy Saturday 1886
- Fr Tolton was sent to Quincy, IL to serve the black community there. He said, "If America has not yet seen a black priest, it must see one now."
- Fr Tolton organized St Josephs' church and school in Quincy, but encountered difficulties: the parish dean who wanted him to refrain from contact with white Catholics, even tho whites who wanted to attend his services, and have him administer the sacraments
- Any Catholic is free to attend services in any parish:
 - Territorial parish is defined by geographic boundaries
 - National parish is distinguished by the ethnicity of the congregation

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- Assigned to Chicago, Fr Tolton developed an African American national parish around St Monica's church which grew to 600 parishioners.
- "Good Father Gus" appealed to worshippers with eloquent sermons and beautiful chanting of the Mass
- White Catholics increasingly attended Mass at St Monica's extraordinary in light of the harsh racial segregation that prevailed then
- Fr Tolton's popularity among Chicago faithful earned him national attention in the American Catholic hierarchy; his fame opened the doors of American seminaries to other African American men.
- When Father Augustine Tolton died in 1897, over 100 priests attended the funeral of "Good Father Gus."

Epilogue

- The Roman Catholic Church, world's largest Christian denomination, is now considering sainthood for Fr Augustine Tolton; to be canonized, a person must be proven to have practiced Christian virtues to a heroic degree. Then, two miracles must be proven to have occurred due to that person's intercession with God.
- In 2010, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago began official investigation into the life of Fr Tolton to establish reason to canonize him

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
- Will be an auction item at Sept 14, 2019 annual SBCWRT picnic; Starting Bid: \$20; Incremental Bids Minimum: \$2
- Proceeds split between SBCWRT & San Mateo County History Museum

August Presentation

Speaker: Jim Rhetta & Tom Roza

Topic: How to Write a Book

September Presentation

Speaker: Jim Rhetta

Topic: The Civil War in the Generations of Human Warfare

October Presentation

Speaker: Gary Yee

Topic: Port Hudson