



# **SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

## **South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes October 27, 2020**

**Meeting Location:** Online via ZOOM Meeting Application

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

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

Cancelled Due to Coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic

### **Officer Reports**

#### **President**

##### **Research & Books**

- Dixie's Forgotten People: The Southern Poor White
- The Postwar Lives of Civil War Veterans

##### **December 29<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Meeting (via ZOOM)**

- Maintain interest in the Roundtable by holding December meeting
- Include 3-4 short presentations (10-12 mins) by different members; contact Jim Rhetta for presentations ideas
- Meeting approved by those in attendance

#### **Vice President**

No Report

#### **Treasurer**

- Bank Account: Approximately \$3,267

#### **Secretary**

- September meeting minutes posted on SBCWRT web site
- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About The South's Reasons For Secession?
- Book Raffle: N/A
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 7

## **Preservation**

No Report

## **Historian**

Vacant

### **This Day in the Civil War: October 27th**

**1861:** CSS Sumter captures schooner Trowbridge, loots the cargo then sinks the ship. In Springfield MO, General Charles Fremont believes forces led by Confederate General Price are advancing on the city. Actually, Price is in full retreat from Springfield, with no plans to fight Fremont. (As a military leader, Fremont left much to be desired.)

**1862:** Two Confederate blockade runners captured as the blockade tightens. There is fighting at Fayetteville Arkansas and Georgia Landing Louisiana.

**1863:** In Louisiana, General Nathaniel Banks gets expedition under way from New Orleans to the Texas coast. At the border of Tennessee and Georgia, General Hooker advances to foot of Lookout Mountain, opening a supply line and relieving the siege of the city by General Braxton Bragg. There is skirmishing near Tulip Arkansas, Clinch Mountain Tennessee, and Little Bear Creek Alabama.

**1864:** On Roanoke River near Plymouth North Carolina, US Naval Lt William Cushing leads a crew of 14 men in daring night attack that rams and sinks the CSS Albemarle. At the Petersburg, VA, 17 thousand Federal troops advance south and west towards South Side Railroad. Advance is halted at Burgess Mill by Confederate troops including Hampton's cavalry and infantry led by Heth and Mahone. In east Tennessee, skirmishes at Mossy Creek and Panther Springs.

### **Person of the Month: Sir William Berkeley, Royal Governor of Virginia**

#### **Background**

- Sir William Berkeley was an English nobleman, a Royalist Cavalier, a member of the court of King Charles I; What could a 17th century Virginia cavalier nobleman have to do with what led up to the Civil War in the 19th century?
- Some causes of the Civil War were immediate, chiefly the election of Abraham Lincoln as President; other causes took root and began to grow generations before the outbreak of the Civil War.

#### **Governor of Virginia Colony**

- In 1641, Berkeley was commissioned Royal Governor of the colony of Virginia and ruled for 35 years; transformed Virginia from an impoverished lawless settlement of a few thousand colonists into an ordered agrarian society, based on a cash crop economy.

- Berkeley imposed upon Virginia a replication of his native English home in Devonshire with well-defined social classes, governed by a tightly knit hereditary elite of landed gentry
- While other parts of England were increasingly growing towns, and growing food on farms owned by those who tilled the soil, Devonshire remained rural, owned by landed gentry controlling tenant farmers
- Shortly after Berkeley arrived in Virginia, the English Civil War broke out between Puritans led by Oliver Cromwell and Cavalier Royalists loyal to King Charles I; the Puritans won, the king deposed and beheaded
- Berkeley had dealt with social chaos; now, rebellion in England had led to a war costing over a hundred thousand lives; Berkeley was convinced that Virginia's future depended on everyone knowing and keeping their place and accepting dominance by a governing elite
- Berkeley personally created much of Virginia's legal code and recruited his fellow Cavaliers to settle in Virginia; they gladly as refugees from the Civil War and were promptly given large land grants and political offices
- When the monarchy was restored in 1660, more Cavaliers came, often the younger sons of noble families since the eldest son in these families inherited the estate intact; these Cavaliers and their descendants became the First Families of Virginia, at the apex of the social pyramid; Robert E Lee was descended from one of these First Families; his authority during and after the Civil War owed much to this fact.
- But the great majority of immigration to Virginia came not from the top of English society, but from the bottom, transported criminals and indentured servants, and, increasingly, slaves from Africa
- Indentured servitude was a form of temporary slavery; in return for passage to America, a person bound themselves to a term of servitude, typically five or seven years; during this term, the servant was completely in the power of the master.
- Those who survived servitude wound up making a bare living either on marginal land unwanted by the gentry, or as sharecroppers for a great landowner; here was the beginning of the class of Southern poor whites
- Tragically, the landed gentry would secure their power for generations to come, by among other things, using the concept of white supremacy to set the poor whites against the black slaves.

### **Connection to Civil War**

- Berkeley also shaped the future of Virginia by who and what he chose to exclude; the Anglican Church of England was the established church; no other religious denominations were allowed
- Berkeley and the gentry feared the possible spread of literacy to those who labored for them; Berkeley legally prohibited public schools and the importing of printing presses to Virginia

- The gentry regarded literacy as unneeded by those meant for a life of manual labor; literacy could enable the spread of ideas that might lead to violent rebellion against the social order
- Teaching a slave to read was a criminal offense; conformity was prized; dissent swiftly punished; Virginia became fiercely resistant to change
- The Virginia gentleman farmer, and the slave-owning that made his lifestyle possible, would become the cultural ideal embraced by the South as the slaveholding cash crop economy spread southward from Virginia
- Tragically, the society initially created to offer stability in the aftermath of a bloody civil war, would come to suffer violent devastation by clinging to a culture that led to...another Civil War

### **Other Topics**

None

### **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

### **December Presentation**

Speaker: TBD

Topic: TBD

### **Presentations: Differing Viewpoints Topics (*To Be Scheduled*)**

*(These presentation topics require member volunteers and dates to be performed)*

**#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 he 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Bull Run, would that have been a positive or negative for the Confederacy

YES: TBD; NO: TBD

Date: TBD