



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Meeting Minutes October 26, 2021

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

Special Activities & Events:

None

Officer Reports

President

- Civil War in the News
 - No Report
- Book Review
 - No Report

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- Bank Account: \$2,784
- Provided copies of membership roster requesting review and update of contact information

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About England's and France's Involvement in the Civil War?
- Book Raffle: \$20
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 14 (11 in-person; 3 via ZOOM)

Preservation

- SBCWRT still offers a matching grant of up to \$500 for any member who donates to a Civil War battlefield preservation event

Historian

- History affects the present; therefore, the study of all history should be encouraged in order to lessen the possibility of repeating mistakes that were made in the past.
- Is reviewing the book, “Gods and Generals” by author Jeff Shaara for the purpose of making a future presentation to the SBCWRT

This Day in the Civil War: October 26th

1861: Federal gunboat USS Conestoga carries Union troops up the Cumberland River for successful attack on Saratoga, KY. Union troops under Brig Genl Kelley take Romney, an important post in northwest Virginia, with few losses. Federal Col George Wright formally assumes command of the Dept of the Pacific

1862: Army of the Potomac, inactive since the mid-Sept Battle of Antietam, begins crossing Potomac River into Virginia. Genl Braxton Bragg evacuates KY, and begins moving towards eastern Tennessee. In Texas, Indianola falls to Federal gunboats

1863: Grant commences operations to reopen Tennessee River route into Chattanooga, TN. Confederates attack wagon train near New Baltimore, VA. There is also fighting at Ravenswood, WV, Warm Springs, NC, Sweet Water, TN, and near Cane Creek AL

1864: Confederate guerilla Bloody Bill Anderson is killed in an ambush near Richmond, MO. There is fighting in Scott County , VA, Winfield, WV, at Albany, MO and Decatur, AL

Delaware: A Unique State Uniquely Important in the Civil War

Background

- Second smallest state (Rhode Island being the smallest), Delaware is barely visible on a map of the United States
- In Civil War histories, Delaware is barely mentioned, other than briefly included in the list of border slave states that remained Union loyal, loyalty that mattered during the Civil War.
- Delaware’s history makes it unique among the states. The first Europeans to colonize what would become Delaware were a party of Dutch, Swedes and Finns who established a trading post in the 1630’s
- In 1655 this colony was annexed to Dutch New Netherland, which was then conquered in 1664 by British forces led by the Duke of York. In 1682 the Duke gave Pennsylvania to William Penn
- Pennsylvania at this point included the strip of land off the coast of the Delaware River, where the river empties into the Atlantic Ocean

- Termed the Lower Counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex, this strip of land expanded access to the Atlantic sea trade. Which is why Penn and the Duke of York went to some trouble to pry these three counties from the neighboring colony of Maryland
- A governor appointed by the Penn family, along with a general assembly, met in Philadelphia to govern the colony
- Then in 1704, the Lower Counties formed their own general assembly, which met in the town of Newcastle. Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties continued to share the same governor until the state of Delaware was formed.
- The northernmost county New Castle, bordering Pennsylvania, predominantly Quaker, became urban, commercial, and densely populated. Kent and Sussex remained mostly agricultural, lightly populated by planters from neighboring Maryland and Virginia, who established tobacco cash cropping produced by slave labor.
- But by the end of the Revolutionary War, slavery was in long term decline in Delaware. The Quakers along with the Methodists persisted in urging the planters to free their slaves for moral reasons. And the planters increasingly took up food crop mixed farming, for consumption in the nearby markets of New Castle County
- Switching from cash crop monocropping to foodstuffs mixed farming made for financial stability, making for a smooth trend away from slavery to tenant farming.
- By 1810 three-fourths of the Delaware African-American population was free; by 1860, nine-tenths. At the end of the Civil War, Delaware legally ended slavery in the state. But not until 1901 did Delaware ratify the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the US Constitution.

During the Civil War

- Delaware was uniquely a problem-free border slave state. The voluntary freeing of slaves had gone on for so long, the remaining slaveholders had very little reason to embrace a cause willing to fight to perpetuate slavery
- Delaware was the one and only slave state from which no Confederate regiments, militias or partisan groups were formed. What few Delawareans did fight for the Confederacy, did so by joining forces mustered in Virginia and other Confederate states
- It's estimated around 950 Delawareans joined Confederate units. Around 13 thousand Delawareans fought for the Union, including 954 "colored troops."
- Another thing: Delaware had long upheld civic pride in being the first state to ratify the US Constitution. The saying went, "We were the first to enter the Union, and we'll be the last to leave it."

- So what difference did Delaware make during the Civil War? Delaware was small in area, yet strategically located. (Much like the island of Malta, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, fiercely fought over in World War II.)
- Take a look at a map of Delaware and the surrounding states, and how close Delaware is to Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC.
- And, in Wilmington, Delaware, was the factory of E. I. Du Pont De Nemours and Company, known simply as DuPont. The DuPont family, headed by Henry DuPont, commander of the state militia, was determined Delaware stay in the Union
- Fortunately for the Union, for by the mid-19th century the DuPont Company just so happened to be the world's largest producer of a very essential ingredient in 19th century war making: Gunpowder.
- If Delaware had somehow fallen to the Confederacy, one has to wonder what difference this might've made in Civil War history.

Other Topics

None

October Presentation

Speaker: Robert Sweetman

Topic: Book Presentation via ZOOM: The Loyal, True, and Brave.

Covers the period between the beginning of the battle of Chancellorsville to the end of the battle of Gettysburg.

November Presentation

Speaker: Kristin Patterson

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

December

No Meeting

January Presentation

Speaker: Meg Groeling

Topic: New book: "First Fallen: The Life of Colonel Elmer Elsworth, the North's First Civil War Hero"