



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Meeting Minutes January 25, 2022

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

Special Activities & Events:

None

Officer Reports

President

No Report

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- As of December 31, 2021, year ending Wells Fargo checking account balance was \$1,635.93
- There have been no transactions since that date.

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: Not Conducted due to time constraint
- Book Raffle: \$8
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 12 (9 in-person; 3 via ZOOM)

Preservation

No Report

Historian

History of the Song Taps

- The tune is a variation of an earlier bugle call known as the "Scott Tattoo", which was used in the U.S. from 1835 until 1860

- It was arranged in its present form by the Union Army Brigadier General Daniel Butterfield, an American Civil War general and commander in the Army of the Potomac while at Harrison's Landing, Virginia
- Butterfield's version in July 1862 replaced a previous French bugle call used to signal "lights out"
- Butterfield's bugler, Oliver Wilcox Norton was first to sound the new call
- Within months "Taps" was used by both Union and Confederate forces. It was officially recognized by the United States Army in 1874
- "Taps" concludes many military funerals conducted with honors at Arlington National Cemetery and elsewhere in the United States

Stephen McMahon

- Is a relative of SBCWRT's Historian, Tom McMahon
- Stephen McMahon served in the Union Navy during the Civil War

This Day in the Civil War: January 25th

1861: In Hampton Roads, VA, Federal reinforcements sail from Ft Monroe to Ft Pickens on Santa Rosa Island, off the coast of Pensacola, FL. North Carolina has submitted the issue of secession to the state citizens.

1862: In NC, the struggle continues to move the troop transports across the sandbar at Hatteras inlet into Pamlico Sound, to conduct operations against Roanoke Island. This laborious operation is not menaced by the Confederates, who are undermanned and undersupplied on land and sea.

1863: Lincoln informs Halleck and Secty of War Stanton that he is relieving Genl Burnside of command, and naming Genl Hooker to command the Army of the Potomac. Burnside had never wanted the command and had proved inept; Hooker is known as a fighter and does want the command. Meanwhile on the SC coast, the organization of the 1st regiment of the Union Negro SC soldiers is completed. Marmaduke's raiding Confederates reach Batesville, AR. In TN, skirmishing near Mill Creek, a Union reconnaissance from Murfreesboro to Auburn, and Union scouting from Bolivar TN to Ripley, MS.

1864: Union forces evacuate Corinth, MS in a move to consolidate their occupation points in the West. In VA, fire destroys Confederate hospital buildings at Camp Winder near Richmond. In FL, there is a fight at Bayou Grand, in TN skirmishing at LaGrange, MS at Mt Pleasant, in AR at Sulphur Springs.

1865: A reconnaissance by Sherman's forces in SC from Pocatalico to the Salkehatchie River, "to amuse the enemy" as Sherman puts it. Skirmishing near Powhatan VA and Simpsonville, KY. In NC, the lights on The Mound at the Cape Fear River approach to Wilmington, have been kept burning to lure blockade runners. The blockade runner Blenheim, thinking The Mound

still in Confederate hands, is lured into capture by the USS Tristram Shandy, Lt Francis Green commanding.

Place of the Month: Canada and the Civil War

Background

- The Civil War created an economic boom for our neighbor to the north, due to the ravenous Union demand for agricultural products, manufactured goods and shipbuilding. Even so, the two neighboring countries had long had an uneasy relationship. The aftermath of the Civil War would see the first steps in creating the country we know today as Canada.
- On the eve of the Civil War, the country termed “Canada” as such did not yet exist. Rather, there was a string of British colonies bordering the North Atlantic: Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, termed The Maritimes.
- Adjoining these were the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, these two formed the United Province of Canada. On the Pacific Coast were British Columbia and Vancouver. Collectively, they all formed British North America. They all owed allegiance to the British Crown, and obeyed British laws.
- And they were all uneasy about the repeated land-grabbing attempts (also known as “Manifest Destiny”) by their American neighbor. In the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, Americans had made brief futile attempts to forcibly grab parts of British North America
- Then, in the brief Aroostook War of 1837, the state militia of Maine attempted to grab part of New Brunswick on the north border of Maine. A small but immensely valuable piece of land covered by old growth pine forests, ideal for making ship masts. A new boundary halfway between was peacefully established
- Only a few years later war almost broke out over conflicting claims to the Oregon Territory. Once again, the conflict was resolved with a compromise border.
- And then, the United States proved to be willing and able to wage a victorious land-grabbing war against Mexico. British North America anxiously wondered, Would there be no end to America’s greed for new lands?
- British North Americans were antislavery. By 1860 there were about 18 thousand free people of color, residing in British North America beyond the reach of the US Fugitive Slave Law. These people had either fled slavery or were the descendants of those who had done so.

During the Civil War

- Just the same, Canada prepared for possible war with the US. When Britain briefly considered recognizing the Confederacy, US Secretary of State William Seward warned this could lead to the US declaring war.
- Consequently, the militia in Quebec and Ontario were deployed to guard railroad lines linking their provinces to New England and Michigan.
- During the Trent affair, when Confederate emissaries to Britain and France were seized by a Federal ship from the British ship Trent, Britain dispatched 14 thousand combat troops to The Maritimes, and called up 40 thousand British North American militia troops. The Trent affair was settled quickly and peacefully. And Britain never did recognize the Confederacy. The British government undoubtedly kept in mind that the US just might use these sorts of things as a pretext to make yet another land grab attempt.
- So most British North Americans were only too willing to comply with the policy of neutrality. Even so, it's estimated somewhere between 33 to 55 thousand Canadians served in the Union Army. Perhaps a couple of hundred fought for the Confederacy
- It is known that Confederate agents secretly used Maritime operation bases in blockade running, keeping the US Navy North Atlantic Blockading Squadron plenty busy. In particular, one Halifax Nova Scotia merchant Benjamin Wier, provided blockade runners with ship repair facilities in exchange for cotton bales (not for nothing was cotton called "white gold").
- Whatever sympathy British North Americans might have had for the Confederates evaporated when Confederates used Montreal as a secret base to plan and launch a series of raids across the border, the most memorable being the St Albans VT bank robberies in Oct 1864.
- 3 banks were robbed of \$170 thousand total, Union forces pursued the Confederates; Canadian police caught and jailed them. A Canadian judge ruled that since the raiders were not authorized by the Confederate government, their crime was not a felony, which would have permitted their extradition by the US authorities. The raiders went free, and disappeared from history.
- British North America complied with the Crown policy of neutrality during the Civil War, for example refusing to return deserters and draft dodgers either to the Union or the Confederacy.

After the Civil War

- The most lasting impact the Civil War had on British North American history, was after the war's end. The British government had learned some valuable lessons from America's terrible experience.
- To start with, relations among the provinces and colonies had never been entirely harmonious. The people of Ontario thought they had little in

common with The Maritimes, who in turn felt more akin to New Englanders.

- More ominously, the Quebecois, the French speaking people of Quebec, had never really reconciled themselves to British rule. Britain now realized, that if left unchecked, such sectional differences just might lead their people in North America down the road to serious conflicts, if not outright civil war.
- Even if British North Americans avoided this, the US could never be entirely trusted to cease land grabbing. Now was the time for the Crown to unite British North America to check sectional differences, and deter future land grabbing schemes by the US. In 1867, the Constitution Act was made law, creating the Dominion of Canada.
- The authors of this Constitution had concluded that the American Civil War had ultimately been caused by the US Constitution granting too much power to the states, at the expense of the national government. Therefore, the Canadian Constitution created a more powerful, centralized national government, with less power at the local level than in the US.
- Today, we have come to take for granted that the US and Canada enjoy the world's longest peaceful border between our two countries. It's fascinating to discover that the Civil War, and the British reaction to it, contributed to help bring about this fortunate state of affairs.

Other Topics

None

January Presentation

Speaker: Meg Groeling

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

February Presentation

Speaker: Mark Costin

Topic: "The Overlooked Conflict, the Trans-Mississippi Operations, Part II: The Battle of Pea Ridge"

March Presentation

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

Topic: "Joseph Hooker: Greater Asset or Liability to the Union"