



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes April 26, 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 Mar 3, 2022, ending Wells Fargo account balance: \$1,600.99

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About the Attack on Fort Sumter?
- Book Raffle: \$43
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 17 (14 in-person; 3 via ZOOM)

Preservation

No Report

Historian

Chapter 2 of James M McPherson's The War That Forged A Nation

- 30 years after he served in the Mexican American War and now dying of cancer in 1879, Ulysses S. Grant restated the war was “One of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger nation against a weaker nation”
- McPherson says: “Like the war in Iraq it was a matter of choice , not of necessity, a war of aggression that expanded the size of America by nearly one quarter and reduced that of Mexico by half.”
- 31 years after Mexico had won freedom from Spain the U.S. annexed Texas by way of violence. In the initial stage, Mexico had welcomed American settlers with large land grants , a regretful policy as Americans now out numbering Mexicans 6 to 1 as they brought with them slaves whereas Mexican law had abolished the institution.
- Following the Manifest Destiny program first undertaken by Thomas Jefferson in the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803, President James Polk bypassed Henry Clay’s “44-40 or Fight” and a war with England over Northwest territory; he staged controversial territorial battles eventualized in Mexico's ultimate defeat, resulting into the future expansion of America into the present states of: Utah, California, Nevada, Texas, and New Mexico
- Journalist Horace Greeley had written of the defeated Whig position “A nation cannot simultaneously devote energies to the absorption of other territories and improvement of its own.”
- The Whig position concerned internal improvements such as transportation, education, and economic development in the U.S
- McPherson covers carefully the power of politics in his detailed coverage of the Mexican American War. It is ugly history.
- California’s admission as a free state gave an important impetus to 1850’s bizarre phenomenon of “filibustering” and its political use in our time; it comes from the Spanish “filibuster”, a freebooter or pirate.
- The pirates of the Caribbean in the 1800’s were Jewish refugees fleeing Spain during the religious tyranny of Isabel and Ferdinand.
- Slavery was a controversial issue in what was called Baja or Upper California. Foreseeing the Civil War, Lincoln laid claim to the gold of the Virginia City, Nevada
- California only new state that was never a territory. San Francisco banked gold & silver from the Comstock mines of Virginia City, Nevada
- My grandfather, Alexander John McMahan, Irish immigrant was a miner in Virginia City; my father was born in 1866; the 7th Alexander John McMahan has graduated from the USC School of Dentistry in 2020

- Alcatraz Island was once fortified with heavy canon to guard the gold shipments that once supported Lincoln and his Union cause and passed thru the Golden Gate on its way to Washington D.C.
- There is Civil War history connected to the confiscation of the Almaden mines that are located within shouting distance of historic Willow Glen. As a third-generation native son of The City born in 1928, this writer knew nothing about the Civil War period until our fellow member Rene Accornero introduced me to this august body some 15 years ago
- Union Square in San Francisco was once a huge sand dune and now a posh business area; during the Civil War, was used for political talks favoring the Union

This Day in the Civil War: April 26th

1861: Georgia, Governor issues an order repudiating all debts owed to Northern interests. In Virginia, Maj Genl Joseph E Johnston, is assigned to command all Virginia State forces in & around Richmond.

1862: Farragut moves up the Mississippi River to New Orleans. In defiance, locals have set the waterfront afire, so Farragut anchors his fleet in the river. When Farragut's officers land to meet the mayor of New Orleans, he claims he has no authority to surrender the city. In any event, the city is now fairly taken, and will remain taken by the Federals until the end of the war.

Meanwhile, near Beaufort North Carolina at Ft Macon, the Federal forces of John G Parke bombard the fort til it surrenders late that afternoon. There is skirmishing in Missouri at Neosho and Turnback Creek, and in Tennessee at Atkins' Mill. At the Washington Navy Yard, Pres Lincoln visits the French man-of-war Gassendi, to the crew's shouts of "Vive le President!"

1863: In Mississippi, Grierson proceeds en route to Baton Rouge Louisiana. Meanwhile, Grant continues Preparations to cross the Mississippi River to the east bank, for the expedition against Vicksburg. Confederate Maj Genl Pemberton, trapped inside the beleaguered city, awaits events as best he can. Meanwhile in Missouri, there is skirmishing at the town of Jackson, and Marmaduke's Confederates unsuccessfully attack Cape Girardeau. In Maryland, Confederate raiders led by W.E. "Grumble" Jones fight at Altamont, Oakland, and Cranberry Summit.

1864: The Confederates capture of garrison at Plymouth North Carolina triggers evacuation of the town of Washington North Carolina. Skirmishes in Louisiana at Bayou Rapides Bridge, and Deloach's Bluff. Other skirmishes take place in Wayne County Missouri and near Little Rock Arkansas.

1865: In Virginia, Federal troops surround a barn on the Garrett farm, where John Wilkes Booth and fellow accomplice Herold have been found hiding. Troop commander Lt Col Everton Conger, calls for their surrender. Herold surrenders; Booth refuses. Conger orders barn set afire. When Booth flees,

Sgt Boston Corbett shoots him; Booth dies shortly thereafter on the Garrett porch. Meanwhile in North Carolina, Johnston and Sherman finalize the surrender of all Confederate forces east of the Mississippi River. Surrender terms are virtually identical to those accepted by Lee at Appomattox. Also in North Carolina, Pres Davis and his cabinet meet in the town of Charlotte and agree to attempt escape to west of the Mississippi River. Confederate Atty Genl George Davis leaves the meeting and returns to his home.

Other Topics

Vernon Hayashida: World War I Re-enactment

- Memorial Day May 30
- Location: Oak Hill Funeral Home & Memorial Park - 300 Curtner Ave, San Jose, CA 95125
- Events: Battle scenes and digging of a trench used during WWI

Abby Eller:

- Funder's Book Store:
 - Location: Basement of the San Mateo County History Museum - 2200 Broadway, Redwood City, CA 94063
 - Book Sections: US and Military History
- Peninsula Civil War Roundtable:
 - Meets 3rd Tuesday of each month/Lunch Time
 - Location: Harry's Hofbrau - 1909 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94063
 - May 17 Event: Auction of a copy of the 1885 "Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant"; Starting bid: \$25

April Presentation

Speaker: Mark Costin

Topic: "Battle of Wilson's Creek"

May Presentation

Speaker: Tom Roza

Topic: "State of Wisconsin in the Civil War"

June Presentation

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein and Nick Stern

Topic: "Wargaming"