



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes November 1, 2023

Meeting Location: Holder's Country Inn Restaurant located at 10088 N Wolfe Rd STE 130, Cupertino, CA 95014 across from the former Vallco Fashion Mall and via ZOOM

Special Activities & Events:

WEST COAST CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE **160th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN**

- **Sponsor:** San Joaquin Valley CWRT
- **When:** Nov 3 to 5, 2023
- **Speakers:**
 - Gen. Parker Hills, Jim Stanbery
 - Gen. U.S. Grant (Dr. Curt Fields)
- **Where:**
 - Wyndham Gardens, Fresno Airport
 - 5090 E. Clinton Way
 - Phone 1-866-238-4218
 - \$112 Nightly with Group Block ID# 141218
 - Early Bird Registration \$225 until Oct 1st, After \$250
 - Send to Ron Vaughan:
 - 730 E. Tulare Ave., Tulare 93274
 - ronvaughan@prodigy.net

Officer Reports

President

New Members

- Daniel Hsueh
- David Hsueh

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- As of 10/31 our SBCWRT Wells Fargo checking account balance was \$2,368.86, a decline of \$ 18.28 from the previous month.

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About Union Support in the South During the Civil War?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 14 (10 in-person; 4 via ZOOM)

This Month in Civil War History: October

1861: Battle of Ball's Bluff, Virginia. Colonel Edward D. Baker, senator from Oregon and a friend of President Lincoln, led troops across the Potomac River only to be forced back to the river's edge where he was killed. The ensuing Union withdrawal turned into a rout with many soldiers drowning while trying to re-cross the icy waters of the Potomac River.

1862: Battle of Corinth, (October 3–4, 1862), in the American Civil War, a battle that ended in a decisive victory of Union forces over Confederate forces in northeastern Mississippi.

1863: Bristoe Station Campaign. In a feint toward Washington, Lee's Army of the Northern Virginia marches into northern Virginia in an attempt to flank the Army of the Potomac, under General Meade. Lee successfully outmaneuvers Meade though fails to bring him to battle or catch him in the open. An engagement at Bristoe Station, Virginia, on October 14 gives the campaign its name.

1864: The Battle of Cedar Creek, Virginia. In an early morning surprise attack, Jubal Early's Confederates successfully attack and drive troops of the Army of the Shenandoah from their camps on the banks of Cedar Creek south of Middletown, Virginia. Hearing the fight from his headquarters at Winchester, General Philip Sheridan rides southward, rallying dispirited troops who return to the battlefield. By day's end, Early's forces are put to flight. Despite several attempts to disrupt the US advance in the coming weeks, the struggle for control of the Shenandoah Valley is over.

Historian

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

Background

- Chamberlain was born in Brewer, Maine, the son of Sarah Dupee (née Brastow) and Joshua Chamberlain, on September 8, 1828

- Chamberlain was of English ancestry and could trace his family line back to twelfth-century England, during the reign of King Stephen
- Chamberlain's great-grandfather Ebenezer, was a New Hampshire soldier in the French and Indian War, and the American Revolutionary War.
- Chamberlain became a member of the Congregational Church in Brewer in the mid-1840s, and attended Major Whiting's military academy in Ellsworth. Chamberlain then taught himself Greek so he could be admitted to Bowdoin College in 1848
- At college, Chamberlain was a member of the Peucinian Society, Phi Beta Kappa, and the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity. Chamberlain graduated in 1852, then entered the Bangor Theological Seminary for three years of study. Besides studying in Latin and German, Chamberlain eventually mastered French, Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac
- On 7 December 1855, Chamberlain married Fanny Adams, cousin and adopted daughter of a local clergyman.
- In the fall of 1855, Chamberlain returned to Bowdoin, and began a career in education, first as an instructor in logic and natural theology, then as professor of rhetoric and oratory. He eventually went on to teach every subject in the curriculum with the exception of science and mathematics. In 1861 he was appointed professor of modern languages, which he held until 1865

Civil War

- At the beginning of the American Civil War, Chamberlain believed the Union needed to be supported against the Confederacy by all those willing.
- Many faculty at Bowdoin did not feel his enthusiasm for various reasons and Chamberlain was subsequently granted a leave of absence; in the 20th Maine Regiment; one of Chamberlain's younger brothers, Thomas Chamberlain, was also an officer of the 20th Maine,
- The 20th Maine fought at the Battle of Fredericksburg, suffering relatively small numbers of casualties in the assaults on Marye's Heights
- The 20th missed the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863 due to an outbreak of smallpox in their ranks

Battle of Gettysburg

- Chamberlain became most famous for his achievements during the Battle of Gettysburg
- Chamberlain found himself and the 20th Maine at the far left end of the entire Union line. He quickly understood the strategic significance of the small hill, and the need for the 20th Maine to hold the Union left at all costs.
- The 20th Maine charged down the hill, with the left wing wheeling continually to make the charging line swing like a hinge, thus creating a

simultaneous frontal assault and flanking maneuver, capturing 101 of the Confederate soldiers and successfully saving the flank

- For his "daring heroism and great tenacity in holding his position on the Little Round Top against repeated assaults, and carrying the advance position on the Great Round Top", Chamberlain was awarded the Medal of Honor

Battle of Petersburg

- In April 1864, Chamberlain was promoted to brigade commander shortly before the Siege of Petersburg and given command of the 1st Brigade, First Division, V Corps
- In a major action on June 18, during the Second Battle of Petersburg, Chamberlain was shot through the right hip and groin, the bullet exiting his left hip. Despite the injury, Chamberlain withdrew his sword and stuck it into the ground in order to keep himself upright to dissuade the growing resolve for retreat

Appomattox

- On the morning of April 9, 1865, Chamberlain learned of the desire by General Robert E. Lee to surrender the Army of Northern.
- He was selected to preside over the parade of the Confederate infantry as part of their formal surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 12
- Chamberlain was thus responsible for one of the most poignant scenes of the American Civil War. As the Confederate soldiers marched down the road to surrender their arms and colors, Chamberlain, on his own initiative, ordered his men to come to attention and "carry arms" as a show of respect.

Person of the Month: Blind Tom Wiggins (Mark Costin)

- Tom Wiggins was born in 1849 to Charity Wiggins
- Charity's family — of five, at the time — was put up for sale to settle some of the owner's debts
- Charity made a bold plea to Gen. James Neil Bethune, a fiercely pro-slavery lawyer and newspaper editor in Columbus, Ga., to keep her family together — who bought them out of pity
- Bethune could not have imagined that this would turn into a fortune
- Wiggins was born blind and was severely autistic
- Was obsessed with sounds: rain, wind, clanking tools, kitchen pans
- Discovered the family piano; was what we now call an idiot savant and was a musical genius
- Was hired out as a slave-musician, at a price of \$15,000
- At age of 10, became the first African American performer to play at the White House

- Piano pieces “Oliver Galop” & “Virginia Polka” were published in 1860
- By 1863 he played his own composition, “Battle of Manassas.”
- Played pieces after one hearing, and memorized poems and text in foreign languages
- Eliza sued General Bethune for custody, with Tom's elderly mother Charity enjoined by Eliza's attorney as a party in the plaintiff's suit
- In August 1887 Tom was awarded to Eliza but Eliza did not honor any financial obligations to Charity
- Tom continued to perform until experiencing a stroke in April 1908
- Died June 1908 at age 59

Special Presentation: Tour of the Solomon Islands (Mark Costin)

- Toured various islands involved during battles fought in the South Pacific during WW II
- Visit included former President John Kennedy’s PT109 experience and various locations such as beach landings
- Provided pictures of the wreckage of various military vehicles, planes, and armaments

Other Topics

None

October Presentation

Speaker: Chuck Seekamp

Topic: “The Iron Brigade”

November Presentation

Speaker: TBD

Topic: “TBD”

December

No Meeting