



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes February 27, 2024

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:

1864 to War's End: Central Coast Civil War Conference

When: March 1-3, 2024

Where: Monterey History & Art at Stanton Center
5 Custom House Plaza, Monterey, CA 93955
100-seat Theater
Large public parking lot adjacent to theater

Topics:

- Weekend of presentations by five of nation's preeminent Civil War historians, focusing on events and significance of final stages of the American Civil War.
- Featuring talks by: Gary Gallagher, Harold Holzer, Gordon Rhea, Craig Symonds, and Joan Waugh
- Friday evening reception in Art Gallery, and two days of presentations in the Stanton Center theater (Monterey History & Art at Stanton Center), on Monterey's historic Custom House Plaza.

Website: <https://www.seemonterey.com/event/1864-to-wars-end%3A-central-coast-civil-war-conference/10903/>

American Cruise Line: Civil War Battlefield Cruise

- 35 Days/34 Nights River Cruise
- 13 States - 35 Days/34 Nights

- May 3, 2024 – June 6, 2024
- URL: <https://www.americancruiselines.com/cruises/extended-cruises/civil-war-battlefields-cruise>
- Tel#: 800-460-4518 (Free Brochure)

Officer Reports

President

Preservation: There are an increasing number of requests for donations for battlefield purchases.

Membership:

- Suggestions for attracting new members:
 - Run ads in various periodicals/publications
 - Contact Local History Professors

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- SBCWRT Wells Fargo checking account as of 1/31/24 had a balance of \$2,171.97
- One member 2024 dues paid in the past month Still have 9 members who paid last year who have not yet paid their 2024..

2024 Annual Dues:

- Are due in January for 2024:
- Individual:\$25
- With a 2nd Person:\$40

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About the Battle of Chickamauga?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 13 (12 in-person; 1 via ZOOM)

This Month in Civil War History: February

1861: The delegates at the Montgomery Convention appoint Jefferson Davis as provisional President of the Confederate States of America at Montgomery, Alabama, a position he will hold until elections can be arranged.

1862: Surrender of Fort Henry, Tennessee. The loss of this southern fort on the Tennessee River opened the door to Federal control of the river.

1863: The Battle of Dover, also known as the Second Battle of Fort Donelson, was a battle of the American Civil War, occurring on February 3, 1863, in Stewart County, Tennessee

1864: In Georgia, Camp Sumter Prison Camp opens. Universally referred to as Andersonville Prison Camp, it will become notorious for overcrowded conditions and a high death rate among its inmates

1865: Sherman's Army leaves Savannah to march through the Carolinas

Person of the Month: Lydia Hamilton Smith

- Born around 1814 to white father/mother of mixed race; Free person; Know as a quadroon: one quarter African and $\frac{3}{4}$ European
- Married to Jacob Smith, two sons
- In 1844 separated from husband moved to Lancaster, PA to work for Thaddeus Stevens

Thaddeus Stevens's Housekeeper

- Expansive duties
 - Managed Stevens's houses in Lancaster and Washington
 - She counseled him on business affairs
 - Constant companion at social events
- Believed to use house in Lancaster as stop on the underground railroad
- Thaddeus Stevens served as member of the US House of Representatives
- Leader of Radical Republican fraction of Republican party in the 1860s
- Staunch abolitionist
- Unmarried, Smith was Stevens's housekeeper until his death in 1868
- Stevens's physician stated care of Stevens prolonged life by 6 to 8 years
- Stevens's advocated for the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments

Lydia Hamilton Smith as Businesswoman

- Purchased first property from Stevens in 1860
- Inherited \$500 annuity from Stevens on his death
- Used to purchase his house in Lancaster
- Operated a prosperous boarding house in Washington
- Invested in real-estate and other ventures
- Died in 1884
- Left a legacy for the upkeep of Stevens's grave in her will

Lydia Hamilton Smith Relationship to Stevens

- Exact relationship unclear
- In his one surviving letter to her he addresses her as "Mrs. Smith," unusual deference to an African American servant in that era
- Neighbors considered her to be his common-law wife

- Smith handled social functions, also mingled with Stevens' guests, who were instructed to address her as "Madame" or "Mrs. Smith"
- Opposition newspapers claimed she was frequently called "Mrs. Stevens" by people who knew her

Historian

No Report

Other Topics

Book Talk: - Tonya Graham McQuade - A State Divided: The Civil War Letters of James Calaway Hale and Benjamin Petree of Andrew County, Missouri

- A teacher in a Los Gatos school system
- As always had an interest in the Civil War with a focus on human interest stories

Greg Casey: African American History

- Former member of the SBCWRT in the 1990S
- Long time student of the Civil War/focus on African American history
- Special interest in the following individuals: Frederick Douglas and Booker T Washington
- Recommended the following books:
 - Suns of the Father
 - My Folks Don't Talk To Me About Slavery
 - Incidents on the life of a Slave Girl
 - Up From Slavery
 - Slaves in the Family

February Presentation

Speaker: David Hsueh

Topic: "Gone with the Wind: The Controversial Legacy and Forgotten Memory of Joseph E. Johnston"

March Presentation

Speaker: Tom McMahan

Topic: "Tennessee's Role in the Civil War – Part 2"

April Presentation

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein on

Topic: "Worst Generals of The Civil War - Earl Van Dorn"