



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes March 26, 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:

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

Membership:

- Suggestions for attracting new members:
 - Peninsula CWRT: Good success advertising in local newspaper
Note: Reached out to Cupertino Today – no response yet
 - Contact local college history instructors
Note: No updates
 - Changing the meeting place from Holder's to a Local Library Community/Meeting Room
Note: Preferred location that offers Food Services
 - Connect with history/humanities/English teachers of our local high schools
Note: Will be looked into
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- Host annual or bi-annual "Civil War Movie Nights"
Note1: SBCWRT used to hold annual picnics in September when membership was much larger
Note2: Have purchased C-SPAM DVD/Movies and showed them at meetings; Possible issue with the legality of showing movies to an audience who pays to attend (i.e., Club membership dues)
- Connect with local Cub Scouts or Scouts of America troops and/or collaborate with a local history museum
 Note: Needs more discussion

New Book: Abraham Lincoln: His 1858 Time Capsule

- By Abraham Lincoln
- Encapsulates – in his own hand-written words – the arc of Lincoln's political thinking on this “Paramount issue” of his 1858 Senate campaign: “Negro equality.”

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- SBCWRT Wells Fargo checking account as of 2/29/24 had a balance of \$2,376.02; increase of \$204.05 from the prior month.
- All 2024 dues are now paid except for two members; are at or near our peak for the year.

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: 11 (10 in-person; via ZOOM)

This Month in Civil War History: March

1861: Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the sixteenth president of the United States in Washington, DC

1862: Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), Arkansas. The US victory here loosened the Confederate hold on Missouri and disrupted southern control of a portion of the Mississippi River.

1863: Conscription, or the drafting of soldiers into military service, begins in the North. It had begun in the Confederacy the year before

1864: US General Ulysses S. Grant is appointed lieutenant general, a rank revived at the request of President Lincoln. Grant assumes command of all United States Armies in the field the following day

1865: President Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated for his second term as president in Washington, DC

Persons of the Month: John O'Mahony & Thomas Sweeny

- The Fenians: What do O'Mahoney and Sweeny Have in Common?:
 - Both were Irish nationalist, members of the Fenian Brotherhood
- Fenians were an Irish republican organization:
 - Seeks to end British rule in Ireland
 - Started in 1858 in the US
 - John O'Mahony was a co-founder, lead Presidential faction
 - Thomas Sweeny was Secretary for War for the Senate faction
- Strategy:
 - Bring pressure on Britain by raids and incursions into British North America (Canada before confederation)
 - Utilize Irish veterans of the Civil War
- O'Mahony Led Raid
 - Raid occurred April 1866, at Campobello Island, New Brunswick
 - 700 Fenian soldiers on Maine shore
 - Attack prevented by Royal Navy; Fenian soldiers disbanded
 - O'Mahony concentrated on raising money for rebels in Ireland
- Sweeny Planned Attacks:
 - The more militant Senate Fraction had a separate plan of attacking Canada developed by Sweeny
 - Intent was for multiple invasions at once
 - 1866 attack on Fort Erie from Buffalo across the Niagara river
- Battle of Ridgeway:
 - 600-700 Fenians ambush 850 lightly trained Canadian Militia
 - Troops exchange fire for about 2 hours until Fenians launch a bayonet charge breaking the Canadians
 - Canadians: 9 killed, 37 wounded
 - Fenians: 2 killed, 8 wounded
 - Fenian victory but expecting British reinforcements they retreat to Fort Erie, fight another small battle, and cross the Niagara river
 - 850 Fenians arrested by US authorities
- Results of Fenian Raids:
 - Brigadier-General Thomas William Sweeny was arrested by the United States government for violating American neutrality

- Sweeny released/served in United States Army until he retired in 1870
- Raids did little to advance the cause of Irish independence
- Canadian Confederation formed in 1867 in part to increase security in response to the raids

Historian

- Discussed how recent medical issues has impacted role of Historian

Other Topics

No Report

March Presentation

Speaker: Tom McMahon

Topic: “Tennessee’s Role in the Civil War – Part 2

April Presentation

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

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

May Presentation

Speaker: Mark Costin

Topic: “Battle of Buena Vista - Training Ground for the Civil War”