



SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes July 30, 2024

Meeting Location: Jack's Restaurant & Bar 1502 Saratoga Ave, San Jose, CA 95129 located in the Westgate Center Shopping Mall and via ZOOM

Special Activities & Events:

2nd Annual Central Coast Conference

- Event Theme: Seldom Heard History of the Civil War
- Location: Stanton Center, Monterey, California
- Date: May 2-4, 2025
- Event URL: <https://whtours.org/seldom-heard-history-2025.html>

Officer Reports

President

Membership:

- Suggestions for attracting new members:
 - Contact local college history instructors
Note: No updates
 - Connect with local Cub Scouts or Scouts of America troops and/or collaborate with a local history museum
Note: Needs more discussion
 - Meeting Location Change:
 - Jack's Restaurant & Bar 1502 Saratoga Ave, San Jose, CA 95129 located in the Westgate Center Shopping Mall
 - Confirmed for Months of July and August

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- SBCWRT Wells Fargo checking account as of 6/30/24 had a balance of \$2,342.07. a decrease of \$26.92 from the month before; don't expect any charges until next meeting on July 30
- Jack's Fee: Reduced from \$300 to \$150

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About the Underground Railroad?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 15 (15 in-person; 0 via ZOOM)

This Month in Civil War History: July

1861: The Battle of Bull Run (or First Manassas), is fought near Manassas, Virginia. The Union Army under General Irwin McDowell performs a panicked retreat to the defenses of Washington.

1862: President Lincoln approves the Confiscation Act of 1862, or Second Confiscation Act. This act expands the terms of the previous Confiscation Act, allows broader seizure of Confederate property, the emancipation of enslaved people in Federally occupied territory, and prohibits the return of fugitive slaves.

1863: Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The bloodiest battle of the Civil War dashes Robert E. Lee's hopes for a successful invasion of the North.

1864: Attack on the Defenses of Washington. Jubal Early's troops arrive on the outskirts of Washington, DC, and trade cannon fire with a token Federal force remaining in the forts around the city. President Lincoln observes the skirmishing from Fort Stevens as reinforcements from the Army of the Potomac arrive and quickly fill in the works. Early withdraws that evening.

Co-Persons of the Month: Felix Zollicoffer & Speed Fry

Background

Felix Zollicoffer

- Born May 19, 1812, Maury County, Tennessee
- Apprentice printer and newspaperman
- Served as 2nd lieutenant in Tennessee militia in Second Seminole War
- In 1841, Zollicoffer became editor of Nashville Republican Banner, which was a powerful paper that supported the Whig party
- Supported John Bell for president in 1860
- Representative in state legislature, Tenn Representative in U.S. Congress, was delegate to peace convention in Washington D.C. in January 1861

- Strong supporter of states' rights and was strongly opposed to secession but chose to remain loyal to his state of Tennessee when it seceded

Civil War – Situation in East Tennessee Prior to Jan. 1862

- Zollicoffer takes command, moves into Kentucky Sept. 1861
- Small victory at Barboursville
- Blocked at battle of Camp Wildcat
- Zollicoffer falls back to Mill Springs, TN
- Good defensive position south of the Cumberland river but Zollicoffer positions his men to the north of the river
- Poor position - back to the river
- Dec. 1861 Major General George B. Crittenden appointed to command the district of East Tennessee
- Zollicoffer commands 1st Brigade
- Jan. 1862 Crittenden arrives and sees Zollicoffer's poor position
- No boats to move men across the river
- Crittenden decides to attack the Federals before they can pin his troops

Background

Speed Fry

- Born Sept 9, 1817, Mercer County, Kentucky
- Served as captain in 2nd Kentucky Volunteer Regiment during Mexican American War
- At Battle of Buena Vista, his company fired the last shots of the battle
- Returned home and was appointed a judge of Mercer County
- At start of Civil War, appointed Colonel of the 4th Kentucky Infantry; Part of the 2nd Brigade under Colonel Manson

Civil War – Battle of Mill Springs

- Opening Stage:
 - Confederates attack Manson's Brigade at Logan's Crossroads
 - Confederates initially push back the Union forces
 - Poor visibility due to dark woods, clouded with gun smoke

Death of Felix Zollicoffer

- Zollicoffer who was nearsighted, was conspicuous in front of his men with a white raincoat
 - Mistakenly approached Union 4th Kentucky infantry, believing they were Confederates firing on their own men
 - At first, 4th Kentucky stops firing
 - Zollicoffer's aide came riding from the woods and, attempting to warn the general, fired off a shot
 - Fry fires his pistol at Zollicoffer who is killed
- Fry never specifically claimed he was the one who killed Zollicoffer

- Many reports and paintings at the time give him full credit
- However, there were members from three different Union regiments standing near Fry who also fired
- Zollicoffer first Confederate general to die in the western theater

Speed Fry After Mill Springs

- March 21, 1862, Fry promoted to Brigadier General, commands 2nd Brigade, 1st Division under Buell
- Arrives too late to participate in Battle of Shiloh
- Buell reports that Fry's performance was "inefficient"
- Participated in:
 - Siege of Corinth
 - Battle of Perryville
- Remainder of the war commanded Camp Nelson, the vast Union recruiting and deployment depot south of Lexington
- Directly responsible for deaths of many Black refugees housed at Camp Nelson, primarily women & children who were family members of Black recruits; on Nov 23, 1864, ordered their forced expulsion from the camp during harsh winter conditions
- Mustered out of the service on August 24, 1865, without being awarded brevet rank of major general, which was usually bestowed automatically in the case of a brigadier general with Fry's time in grade
- In 1866, unsuccessful Republican candidate for Congress
- Dies Aug. 1, 1892, near Louisville, KY

Historian

Book: The Class of 1846: From West Point to Appomattox

- No single group of men at West Point--or possibly any academy--has been so indelibly written into history as the class of 1846
- The names are legendary: Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, George B. McClellan, Ambrose Powell Hill, Darius Nash Couch, George Edward Pickett, Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox, and George Stoneman
- The class fought in three wars, produced twenty generals, and left the nation a lasting legacy of bravery, brilliance, and bloodshed.

Other Topics

No Report

August Presentation

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

Topic: "George Armstrong Custer – Part 2"

September Presentation

Speaker: Tonya Graham McQuade

Topic: "TBD"

October Presentation

Speaker: David Hsueh

Topic: "The Battle of Antietam"