



# SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

## South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes March 25, 2025

**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**

#### **SBCWRT Picnic**

- SBCWRT Member, Tonya McQuade offered to host at her family home
- Food/Refreshments:
  - Main Course: BBQ Chicken and Hamburgers provided by Picnic Hosts (cost paid from SBCWRT funds)
  - Other food/refreshment items provided by other members (salads, desserts, drinks, etc.)
  - Date: Tuesday Aug 26 5:30pm
- Attendees:
  - Members plus one guest
  - Non-members who are on the SBCWRT email list are encouraged to attend with the hope that they will considering becoming Dues Paying members

## **Vice President**

No Report

## **Treasurer**

- No Report – will be provided at April Meeting

## **Secretary**

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know Florida In the Civil War?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 17 (15 in-person (10 members, 5 guests; 2 via ZOOM)

## **This Month in Civil War History: March**

**1861**: Confederate delegates in Montgomery approve the Constitution of the Confederate States of America

**1862**: The Battle of Hampton Roads pits USS Monitor and the CSS Virginia (the old USS Merrimack), the first ironclads, against one another off the Virginia coast. On March 8, the CSS Virginia destroys two wooden-hulled Federal ships. On March 9, the USS Monitor arrived and the two ironclads fought for hours, neither inflicting much damage on the other.

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

**1864**: The Red River Campaign begins. As part of an overall Federal strategy to strike deep into various parts of the Confederacy, a combined force of army and navy commands under General Nathaniel Banks begins a campaign on the Red River in Louisiana

**1865**: Sherman's Army captures Columbia, South Carolina while Confederate defenders evacuate Charleston, South Carolina

## **Person of the Month: Alexander Macomb Mason**

### **Innovator, Mercenary, Explorer**

### **Civil War**

- Participated in the Battle of Hampton Roads on CSS Patrick Henry the Battle of Drewy's Bluff and blockade of Charleston aboard CSS Chicora
- Ran the blockade to travel to London and serve as secretary to his uncle James Murray Mason, the Confederate envoy in London

- Ended the war captured as an infantryman in the Naval Brigade at the last-ditch Battle of Sailor's Creek Financial investments included steamships, hotels, wharves, cotton and plantations

### **Mine Warfare**

- Mason was an officer who trained on the innovative new weapons
- October 9, 1861, participated in one of the first mining operations: attacking USS Savannah at Hampton Roads, VA; mines failed to explode

### **After the War – Chile and Peru**

- Recruited by Chile and Peru due/conflict with Spain on the Pacific coast of South America—the Chincha Islands War
- May 2, 1866, Mason devises a layered defense of mines saving the Peruvian port of Callao

### **After the War – Egypt**

- Recruited to join Egyptian General Staff
- Served as Chief of Staff to legendary British General Charles “Chinese” Gordon
- Becomes prominent explorer
- Granted the honorific “Bey” for his service to Egypt
- Ended career serving as the Governor of Massawa and negotiating Anglo-Egyptian treaties with Abyssinia
- Died in 1897; buried in Georgetown, D.C., in his Egyptian uniform

## **Historian**

### **James Longstreet**

- Confederate general during Civil War; was the principal subordinate to General Robert E. Lee, who called him his "Old War Horse"
- Served under Lee as a corps commander for most of the battles fought by the Army of Northern Virginia in the Eastern Theater, and briefly with Braxton Bragg in the Army of Tennessee in the Western Theater
- Prior to the Civil War, Longstreet served with distinction in the Mexican–American War with the 8th U.S. Infantry; fought under Zachary Taylor in the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.
- After the Civil War, applied for various jobs through the Rutherford B. Hayes administration; was briefly considered for Secretary of the Navy
- Served briefly as Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue and Postmaster of Gainesville. Longstreet's chief ambition was to be U.S. Marshal of Georgia.
- President Hayes appointed Longstreet as his Minister Resident to the Ottoman Empire

**Note:** Was featured in the book “Killer Angels” by author Michael Shaara; the film, Gettysburg was based on this book

**Other Topics**

None

**March Presentation**

Speaker: Tonya McQuade

Topic: “Paddy's Lament and the Irish Brigade”

**April Presentation**

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

Topic: “William B. Franklin, One of the Union’s Worst Generals”

**April Presentation**

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

Topic: “William B. Franklin, one of the Union's Worst Generals”