



South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes October 28, 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:
None

Officer Reports

President

No Report

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

- Wells Fargo Checking Account Balance as of 9-30-25: \$2,299.62, a decline of \$114.06 (the cost of the annual picnic) from the prior month.

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About the 1863 New York City Draft Riots?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 11 (11 in-person; 0 via ZOOM)

NOTE: Due to Thanksgiving Day Holiday, the November meeting is scheduled for November 18 at Jack's

This Month in Civil War History: September

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 Perryville. This battle, the largest in Kentucky, saw Confederate General Braxton Bragg retreat after a costly engagement against Union General Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio, effectively ending the Confederate's Kentucky Campaign.

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: Abraham Lincoln was reelected to a second term as U.S. President, defeating Democrat George B. McClellan.

Items of the Month: The General and The Texas & The Great Locomotive Chase

The Great Locomotive Chase

- The Great Locomotive Chase was a military raid that occurred April 12, 1862, in northern Georgia during the American Civil War.
- Volunteers from the Union Army, commandeered a train, The General, and took it northward toward Chattanooga, Tennessee, doing as much damage as possible to the vital Western and Atlantic Railroad (W&A) line from Atlanta to Chattanooga as they went.
- They were pursued by Confederate forces at first on foot, and later on a succession of locomotives, including The Texas, for 87 miles (140 km).

James J. Andrews

- Kentucky born civilian
- Spy and scout for Major General Don Carlos Buell
- Spring 1862, Andrews presented Buell with a plan
- Plan (first raid)
 - Take eight men
 - Meet train engineer willing to defect to the Union
 - Steal train and drive it North
 - Destroying track and bridges along the way
- Team travels to Marietta, Georgia but the engineer had been reassigned, and the raiders returned the North

Road Major General Ormsby M. Mitchell

- In Commanding troops in middle Tennessee at Nashville
- Wants to capture Chattanooga but has limited forces and needs a way to prevent reinforcements entering the city

- Andrews proposes another raid to destroy the Western and Atlantic Railroad, the supply link from Atlanta to Chattanooga
- Andrews recruits men and sets out to Marietta Georgia

Conductor William A. Fuller

- April 12, 1862, Andrews' team steal The General just north of Atlanta
- Andrews cuts the telegraph wires to the south so the station masters along the way do not know The General is stolen
- The train's conductor, William Fuller chases after The General first on foot then on a handcar then on a series of locomotives: Yonah, William R. Smith and finally on the Texas running it backwards

Finally

- Because of rain and not enough demolition equipment, the raiders cannot burn bridges or do much damage to the railways although continued to cut telegraph wires
- Out of fuel, 18 miles from Chattanooga, Andrew and his men abandon The General
- They were all caught within 2 weeks
- Many were tried as unlawful belligerents; Andrews and 7 were hanged

Medals of Honor

- 8 men escape and return to Union lines
- On March 25 it is announced that they would receive the newly approved Medal of Honor
- 7 were the first to receive the award
- Almost all military participants received award including those executed
- Andrews and one other civilian were not eligible

Historian

- Railroads played a critically important role in the Civil War
- Because of industrial growth, northern states had many more miles of railroad tracks that were all the same gauge, meaning railroad cars could be used anywhere
- Because of heavy emphasis on farming in the South, number of miles of railroad tracks was much smaller; track gauges were not standardized causing trains to switch loads and passengers to other rail cars
- A key political action in the Civil War was President Lincoln nationalizing all the railroads in the North to better control the flow of men and supplies; the South did not take a similar action which hampered the flow of men and supplies

Other Topics

None

October Presentation

Speaker: Mark Costin

Topic: "Campaigns against the Apache and Navaho during the Civil War"

November Presentation

Speaker: Davide Hsueh

Topic: "Requiem for Innocence: Destruction of Nature and Animals in the Civil War"

December Presentation

No Meeting in December