



South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes July 28, 2026

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

Introduced Two Guests:

- Gary Johnson: Former member of the SBCWRT; brought a collection of Civil War books and donated them to various members
- Ed Bellerive: Friend of SBCWRT member Roger Bonilla

Vice President

No Report

Treasurer

No Report

Secretary

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About the Klu Klux Klan?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 11 (11 in-person; 0 via ZOOM)

This Month in Civil War History: July

1861: To thwart the Confederate threat in northern Virginia, a series of earthworks and forts are engineered to surround the City of Washington, adding to protection already offered by active posts such as Fort Washington on the Potomac River.

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: US naval and land forces attack Confederate defenses near Charleston, South Carolina. Among the United States troops is the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry, the first African American regiment of volunteers to see combat in the Civil War.

1864: Battles near Tupelo, Mississippi. The US defeat of Nathan Bedford Forrest secured the supply lines to Sherman's armies operating against Atlanta, Georgia.

Item of the Month: John Brown's Pike

Background in the Pike

1857:

- John Brown is fund raising in New England for his abolitionist crusade
- He meets Charles Blair of Collinsville, Connecticut, an expert blacksmith
- He shows Blair a Bowie knife he took from a pro-slavery leader in the Battle of Black Jack
- Could Blair reproduce the knife attached to a 6-foot pole?
- Blair agreed/Brown contracts for 1000 at \$1/es paid for in installments
- Brown failed to keep up with the payments, the manufacturer halted production after making 500 of them, placing them in storage

Lawsuit:

- Graham sued/was represented by law firm of Culver, Parker, and Arthur; lead lawyer Chester A. Arthur, future president of the United States
- Court ruled in her favor; jury awarded Jennings damages of \$250 (equivalent to \$8,600 in 2025) as well as \$22.50 in costs. The next day, the Third Avenue Railroad Company ordered its cars desegregated.
- It took more lawsuits and until 1865 for all New York's public transportation to be desegregated

1859:

- Brown suddenly reappears with enough money for 954 pikes
- Order is completed and shipped to a hideout 5 miles from Harper's Ferry
- They are intended to arm freed slaves in the rebellion caused by the seizure of the armory
- Brown believed "Give a slave a pike and you make him a man. Deprive him of the means of resistance and you keep him down"
- A modest number were delivered but none were used as weapons

Post Attack

- Pikes were either captured in a wagon used in the raid or discovered in the hideout by J.E.B. Stuart
- The pikes became a popular souvenir

- Some cut into pieces, others sold at the railway station in Harper's Ferry
- Edmund Ruffin, a pro-slavery leader, sent some to southern governors labeled "Sample of the favors designed for us by our Northern brethren"
- Each pike had a serial number 1 – 954
- Pike 794 belongs to Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

Historian

- Focused on what is being taught in schools these days regarding the Civil War
- History is a great teacher; future generations need to learn from the past to avoid making the same mistakes

Other Topics

Annual SBCWRT Picnic

- Location: Tonya McQuade's House – 1455 Portobelo Drive –
- Date/Time: Saturday August 29 1pm-4pm
- Food/Refreshments:
 - Main Course: BBQ Chicken and Hamburgers: Prepared by Picnic Hosts (cost paid from SBCWRT funds)
 - Other Food/Refreshment Items: Provided by other members (salads, desserts, chips/dips, drinks, etc.)
- Attendees:
 - Members plus one guest
 - Non-members on SBCWRT email list encouraged to attend with hope that they will considering becoming Dues Paying members

July Presentation

Tonya McQuade on "Mary Brown, the Wife of John Brown"

August Presentation

Annual Picnic: Mark Costin on "Zulu War Travelog"

September Presentation

Dennis Doyle on "Irish Americans during the Civil War"