



Bugle Call Echoes

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

January 2006

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San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table 2005 Board of Directors

President: Brian Clague [Linda]
PO Box 116 Shaver Lake CA 93664
559-841-7161 bclague@netptc.net

Vice President: Dr. Dave Davenport
6156 N Mitre Ave Fresno CA 93705
559-277-3283
davidpauldavenport@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Pattie Spencer
1548 W Vasser Ave Fresno CA 93705
559-233-1059 cell phone: 304-8170

Secretary: Phyllis Mann
4880 N Hulbert Ave #102
Fresno CA 93705 559-229-3778
pfm02@cvip.net

Publicity: Shaun Ardemagni
2580 E Los Altos Fresno CA 93710
559-299-7453 rampchamp@aol.com

Newsletter: Bob Quist [Judy]
504 E Magnolia Avenue
Hanford CA 93230 559-582-9520
bquist1@sbcglobal.net

Directors: Mike & Gloria Carter
1576 E Cornwall Fresno CA 93720
mikecarter@paula.com
gloria.carter@cvcb.com

Past President and Membership:
Tom Carr [Kathy]
2577 South Argyle Avenue
Fresno CA 93727 559-268-4828
carrt@yahoo.com

Round Table starts year with Jan. 26th meeting's 'Share and Tell' format

Greetings to the New Year. We ended the year with a wonderful Christmas party at the home of Tom & Kathy Carr. Their home was decorated magnificently for the season. Many of the highlights of the year were reviewed.

The traditional Shenandoah Breakfast (a club fundraiser) was held in early January at the home of Ken and Barbara Moats. Again, we lingered for hours as we talked about Civil War related topics.

Now we face the challenges of the New Year with the first four months of speakers arranged by V.P. Dave Davenport. Our first meeting on January 26th will be an all-club event with members bringing forward items or stories of interest to share with others. For some members who prefer not to prepare full programs to present, this is a nice opportunity to address your friends and to have a say. We encourage everyone who has an interest to step forward. Even book reviews would be appropriate. If you have the time, let Dave Davenport know that you wish to speak and he can create an agenda on the spot. The evening is fairly informal.

We look forward to another interesting year as we continue our study of the Civil War.

Brian Clague M.D. Club President

P. S. Decisions were made at our Board Meeting on Jan. 19 to send some of the earned monies from the 2005 West Coast Symposium to the following locations and activities:

- √ Reimburse Wayne Sherman \$190.40 for his room, as he was one of our speakers at the symposium
- √ Contribute \$500.00 to the Drum Barracks
- √ Contribute \$500.00 to the Sacramento 19, 2006 CWRT for their Angel Island project
- √ Contribute \$500.00 to the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust
- √ Contribute \$500.00 to the Richmond Battlefield Association
- √ Renew our membership in the Civil War Preservation Trust, \$50.00

Lee and Grant: Profiles in Leadership from the Battlefields of Virginia.

Maj. Charles R. Bowery Jr., American Management Association. 262 pages; photographs; notes, \$24.00. Reviewed in Army: the magazine of the Association of the United States Army (December 2005) by Maj. Tony Burgess.

On May 4, 1864, Ulysses S. Grant crossed the Rapidan River just south of Washington, D.C., to attack Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia, beginning a series of bloody battles collectively named the Overland Campaign. Although the names of the battles provide markers – Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna and Cold Harbor – this campaign was two months of nonstop combat. The author tells us that these battles were “unprecedented in their scale and ferocity, a titanic series of clashes that redefined the savagery of the Civil War. It was the largest, hardest-fought and most destructive military campaign ever waged on the North American continent, and it involved the opposing armies in combat on virtually a daily basis for the entire period.” Talk about fertile ground for a study of leadership.

Maj. Charles Bowery is uniquely equipped to tell this story of combat leadership. He taught at the U. S. Military Academy and is an Army officer with combat experience himself, bringing added credibility to the discussion.

The book begins with chapters introducing Lee and Grant – their backgrounds, values and the events that shaped them – followed by a chronological presentation of the campaign, using the different battles to highlight timeless leadership principles.

This book is an exceptional resource for leaders to read and discuss with their subordinates. Suggested subjects include:

- > The impact of Lee’s personal presence when the North was breaking through at both Wilderness and Spotsylvania.
- > The impact of continuous combat on mental and physical fitness and decision making, especially at North Anna where sickness and exhaustion took a toll on the Confederates.
- > The influence of a calm, cool and collected leader who stays focused on the overall purpose.
- > The need to balance optimism with a realistic assessment of unit capabilities, especially taking into account the degrading impact of continuous operations.
- > The need to shift leadership styles based on the situation and the unit’s condition. Lee, for example, changed from a delegating style to a very direct style as the situation changed and less experienced officers were promoted by necessity.
- > The art of reorganizing your team of leaders in the face of casualties.

If I were to make one suggestion, it would be to remove the occasional use of modern business and sports examples. They detracted from the exceptional story at hand.

Overall, this book is excellent. Bowery makes a significant contribution to Civil War history and, perhaps, an even greater contribution to the development of current military leaders who will be better equipped to lead in combat for having read and reflected on the experiences of Lee and Grant.



For dinner reservations for our next meeting on Thursday, January 26th, at

the Ramada Inn at the Shaw off-ramp on Freeway 41... contact Secretary Phyllis Mann at 229-3778 [afternoons or evenings, please] or e-mail at: pfm02@cvip.net

2006 SJV CW Round Table Memberships

Your 2006 membership year is from January - December. If you have not renewed your membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Roundtable, they are due now.

Use the form on the back of the newsletter to become current.

The cost of membership remains the same:

Individual or family - \$25.00

Student or newsletter only - \$12.50

As always, \$5.00 of each membership goes toward Civil War Battlefield Preservation.

Mark your calendars

2006 Programs a Work in Progress

The Board generally tries and hold our dinner meetings on the 4th Thursday of the month, although at times the dates may change depending on the speaker's schedule.

The 2006 dates so far are as follows: January 26, February 23, March 30, April 27, May 25, September 28, and October 26 and November 30. The board still has to decide when the picnic will be and also whether to combine Nov. and December meeting dates as the 4th Thursday is Thanksgiving.

Our first meeting in 2006 will be on Thursday, January 26th. The Show 'n Tell or Share 'n Tell format is one we have done so successfully the past several years. Again, it will be at the Ramada at the Shaw off ramp next to Freeway 41. For more information see President Brian's message on page 1. Remember, a dinner count is needed by our Secretary, Phyllis Mann, for the evening. See the next page for RSVPing and we hope to see you there!

On February 23 Mr. Robert Fitzpatrick will talk to us about "Money from the Revolution to Reconstruction". He has been collecting examples of coinage and paper currency, especially private bank notes and Civil War era currency, for the past decade. He has been a third grade teacher at Ernie Pyle Elementary for the past 22 years.

On March 30 (not the 23rd because he is working) President Lincoln (aka Wayne Scott) will talk to us in the first person about "Lincoln and Constitutional Rights". I asked him to give attention to such issues as habeus corpus in time of war, the legitimacy of secession, control of the press, etc.

On April 27 Zoyd Luce will discuss the life of Alexander Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy.

May is still open at this point.

At our June picnic Evan Jones will speak about the adjustment of Confederate soldiers to life in the post-war South.

We don't meet in July and August.
Program Chair and Vice President
Dave Davenport

Fact or Fiction?

by David Paul Davenport

I am a member of the History Book Club. Each month I receive a packet of materials concerning recent publications that may be of interest to me. Many, in fact, are, but over the past decade or so I have become increasingly concerned about the novels and other historical fiction that is available.

The extent to which these works of fiction shape our knowledge of events is problematic. Killer Angels is a case in point. Joshua Chamberlain was largely unknown to Civil War enthusiasts before Sharra's novel because he was little more than a cog in a wheel. Now he is an immortal warrior, bigger than life, and the Hero of the 2nd Day of Gettysburg – if the book is to be believed.

As a professionally trained historian with thirty years experience I find myself analyzing historical fiction with the same critical eye that I use when reading non-fiction. I usually know enough to "fix" errors of fact in the books I read by writing in the margins the correct information. What is truly problematic for me is not being able to correct the errors for other readers, especially youngsters who end up accepting as Gospel the words of the novelist.

I suppose I have the same criticism of movies. Braveheart, for example, was very entertaining but when Wallace's victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge was depicted without the Bridge I was quite horrified. Davy Crockett will forever be remembered as John Wayne portrayed him, fighting to his last breath, and not cowering beneath a bed in the infirmary from where an eye witness reports he was taken and shot.

I don't suppose there is anything I can really do about this problem other than encourage my fellow readers to read a work of non-fiction by a reputable scholar before buying the latest novel from the New York Times Best seller list. It is also prudent to know something about the author before buying his or her work.

What I would like to suggest is that in calendar year 2006 we read more critically and at some point, perhaps at our December Christmas Party, a few of us volunteer to give a book report about a non-fiction work or a novel we have read this year.

May I ask for volunteers?

2006 MEMBERSHIP FORM - Membership year is from January to December

Please begin/renew my membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY membership - \$25.00

STUDENT membership or NEWSLETTER ONLY - \$12.50

*\$5.00 of each membership goes toward CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

Name _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Bring this membership form and your check to our next monthly meeting, or mail it to our P.O. Box below:

San Joaquin Valley
Civil War Round Table
P O Box 5695
Fresno CA 93755

