

Bugle Call

ECHOES

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San Joaquin Valley
Civil War Round Table

April 1993

War's Effect on Family

Walter Rodgers, a member of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table, will be the speaker at the April 30 luncheon meeting. His topic will be "The War Between The States And Its Effect On One Southern Family." Rodgers talk will be based on letters between the family at home and Captain William McWillie Jr., a Confederate officer who was Rodgers' great grandfather.

Rodgers once before was the speaker at a Round Table luncheon and the basis of that talk was a set of letters from another Confederate soldier who also was one of Rodgers' ancestors. Another of Rodgers' great grandfathers was Tilghman Tucker, the 9th governor of Mississippi. William McWillie Sr., the 14th governor of Mississippi was Rodgers great-great grandfather.

Rodgers was born in Petersburg, Pa., March 27, 1915 and was brought to California in 1920. He was educated at Menlo Junior College and was graduated from Stanford University in 1937. He also has

Luncheon checks (\$10) as reservations should be made out to The Downtown Club and mailed to:

Civil War Round Table, 8665 N. Cedar, No. 112 Fresno, Ca. 93720.

Reservation deadline is Wednesday, April 28.

taken classes at the University of Virginia, Pasadena City College, and Heald College at San Francisco.

He began his career with Matson Navigation Co. in 1938 and was a staff officer in the U.S. Maritime Service during World War II. He left that service in 1947, and between 1950 and 1983, when he retired, he was with Bervan Carpet Co., in Fresno as a division sales manager and vice president.

He married Elizabeth Gordon Bower and they have four children. He also has three step children, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

The Bloodiest Day

(excerpted from National Park Service pamphlet)

The bloodiest day of the Civil War was Sept. 17, 1862 at Antietam (Maryland), called Sharpsburg by the Confederates. About 40,000 Southerners led by Gen. Robert E. Lee were pitted against the 87,000-man Army of the Potomac under Gen. George B. McClelland.

The battle opened at dawn when Union Gen. Joseph B. Hooker's artillery began a murderous fire on Gen. Stonewall Jackson's troops in the Miller cornfield north of the town of Sharpsburg.

"In the time I am writing," Hooker reported, "every stalk of corn in the northern and greater

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Harriet Beecher Stowe

By Serena Kubiak

"So this is the little lady who made this big war," said Abraham Lincoln when he first met the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A respected, popular author, Harriet Beecher Stowe became a heroine to the Northern abolitionists with her influential writings. She believed in equal rights for everyone and advocated the rights of women and children in all her works.



Stowe was born in Litchfield, Conn. on June 14, 1811, the daughter of the Rev. Lyman Beecher of the Congregational Church. Roxanna Beecher, Harriet's mother, had nine children, two of whom died in infancy. She died in 1816 when Harriet was 5 years old. The care of Harriet and the other younger children then became the responsibility of the oldest sister, Catherine.

In 1832 Harriet's father became president of the Lane Theological Seminary and the family moved

to Cincinnati. Her first published writing was in 1833 in the *Western Monthly Magazine*, and she continued to contribute a series of sketches, stories and articles to local newspapers and magazines.

Harriet married a seminary professor, Calvin Ellis Stowe in 1836. The couple had seven children. Poverty was a constant companion of the Stowes, even though Harriet's writings occasionally brought in a small amount of income.

Slavery was legal south of the Ohio River, which bordered Cincinnati, and the city was filled with abolitionists. Harriet Stowe learned from friends who lived in the South, and from personal visits to the South what life was like for the slaves. She and her husband became ardent opponents of slavery.

In 1850, Calvin Stowe was accepted as a member of the faculty at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine and the family left Ohio. That same year the Fugitive Slave Laws were enacted. Those laws required officials in the North to return fugitive slaves to their owners, and stated that any person found guilty of assisting a fugitive was subject to a \$1,000 fine and six months imprisonment, plus being required to reimburse the owner the market value of the slave.

Reaction among the abolitionists to these laws influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe to write a novel about the evils of slavery, which she titled *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or the Man That Was a Thing*. The story was first published in installments in the

Dues reminder

Annual dues, which include the newsletter, are \$25 individual or \$40 for a family, of which \$5 goes to battlefield preservation. Newsletter subscriptions are \$10. Checks should be made out to C.W.R.T. and mailed to Tim Johnson, 8665 N. Cedar Ave. #112, Fresno, Ca. 93720, or handed to him at the meeting.

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The San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table usually meets for lunch on the last Friday of the month in the Downtown Club, 2120 Kern St. Fresno.

Fred Holt, President

Charles Jorgensen, Vice President

Linda Clague, Secretary

Tim Johnson, Treasurer

Bill Head, Membership

Walter Rodgers, Member at Large

Verne Cole, Newsletter Editor

Rick Kubiak, Contributing Editor

Cindy Cross, Historical Society Liason

Harriet Beecher Stowe (Continued)

National Era, an abolitionist newspaper beginning June 5, 1851, and concluding on April 1, 1852.

During the time the series was being printed, readers wrote to the newspaper requesting that the story be printed in book form. When the final chapter appeared, it was announced that the story would become a book. The subtitle was then dropped.

The book was a phenomenal success. During the first year 300,000 copies were sold, and within a decade more than 2 million, making it the best seller of all time in proportion to population. The author, however, received relatively little money for her labor. The book later was translated into 20 languages.

Winifred E. Wise, in her book, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: Woman With a Cause*, states that "Harriet Beecher Stowe produced the most potent and influential book of the 19th century and one of the most widely discussed novels of all time."

John R. Adams, in his book, *Harriet Beecher Stowe*, wrote "Harriet was a shrewd observer, frequently witty, and a significant exponent of American idealism."

For most of her life, she lived in poverty and obscurity. So when she wrote of the oppressed and the subservient, she injected events from her own life. When she wrote, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the death of Eva she wrote with experience of the sorrow since one of her own daughters had died.

Her writing had a great influence upon the American people and subsequently upon the

Need a ride? Anyone needing a ride to the April 30 luncheon meeting may call Bill Head at 439-8246.

nation as a whole. She stands out as one of the most famous writers in American history. She died at 85 years of age on July 1, 1896 in Hartford, Conn.

Testing, Testing . . .

A quiz to test your knowledge of the Civil War:

1. How do the numbers of American casualties at the battle the Union called Antietam compare with the American losses on Normandy beaches during World War II?
2. How do American casualties during the Civil War compare with American losses in other wars?
3. Many of the military leaders of the Civil War both North and South, received their actual combat training together. Where and when?

Quiz Answers

1. The number of men who fell at Antietam outnumbered the American D-Day casualties on Normandy Beach, France June 6, 1944 by four to one. The 23,000 casualties in the one day at this battle the Confederates called Sharpsburg were more than in the entire War of 1812, the Mexican War and the Spanish-American War combined.
2. American casualties in the Civil War, 620,000, outnumber the combined American casualties of all other wars in which the United States has been involved including the two World Wars and Vietnam.
3. Gen. Winfield Scott, who led the American capture of Mexico City in the Mexican War, had as junior officers Pierre G. T. Beauregard, George B. McClelland, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, John Pemberton, James Longstreet, William Scott Hancock, George Pickett, Albert Sidney Johnston, George Hooker, Jefferson Davis, George H. Thomas, and Braxton Bragg.

Classified Ads

(For members only, and only for books and Civil War mementoes).

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The Bloodiest Day (Continued)

part of the field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few minutes before."

Jackson reported his men were "exposed for near an hour to a terrific storm of shell, canister and musketry."

About 7 a.m. Jackson was reinforced and succeeded in driving back the Union troops. An hour later, Union Gen. Joseph Mansfield's troops counter-attacked and by 9 a.m. had regained some of the lost ground. Gen. John Sedgwick's division advanced into the West Woods to aid Mansfield, but there was struck by Confederate troops on both flanks with appalling casualties.

Gen. William H. French's division moved up to support Sedgwick but veered into Confederates under Gen. D.H. Hill along an old sunken road. For 3 1/2 hours bitter fighting raged along this road, afterwards known as Bloody Lane.

Southeast of Sharpsburg, Gen. Ambrose Burnside's troops had been trying to cross a

bridge over Antietam Creek, but were driven back by some 400 Georgians time after time. Finally, after frightful casualties, the Federals crossed and drove the Georgians back toward Sharpsburg. Gen. A.P. Hill's division arrived from Harpers Ferry and entered the fight, driving Burnside's troops back to the heights near the bridge they had taken earlier.

The battle of Antietam was over. The next day Lee began withdrawing his army across the Potomac. Federal losses were 12,410, Confederate losses were 10,700.

Miscellaneous

The Civil War Round Table Associates, an umbrella for nationwide Round Tables, publishes a fine battlefield preservation newsletter, *Civil War Round-Table Digest*. To join and subscribe send \$12.50 for the first year to: Jerry Russell, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, AR. 72217.

If you would like to present a program at the Round Table for any month please notify Charles Jorgensen so it can be scheduled.



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