



# Bugle Calls



## SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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### SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT

MARCH 2013

Wow, February just flew by and now we are into March.

We had a wonderful program in February. Lisa Peters did a great job on presenting her program on the food that was provided to both sides during the war. I'm sure that Ron will give you a good detailed report on Lisa's program but I will say that the ginger snap cookies were excellent.

Our March program will feature the music of the Civil War provided by Jimmy Collier who will sing and play his banjo. This should be an interesting program. Remember we meet on March 14<sup>th</sup>, at Denny's restaurant on Shaw Ave. in Clovis. If you want to have dinner, please get to Denny's around 6 P.M. Our business meeting will start at 7 and the program will begin at between 7:15 and 7:30.

I will avail myself of the opportunity to go to Mooney Grove Park this weekend and witness the reenactment that is taking place there. I am sorry that I didn't let you know about this event in the last newsletter but I only recently was made aware of the event. I hope to have some pictures of some of our members that are participating in the reenactment in our next news let-

ter.

Remember that dues are due for this year. The dues are \$35.00/family and can be submitted to Walt.



## **Pictures of the Re-enactment at Mooney Grove on March 2, 2013**





# AFTER ACTION REPORT

SJVCWRT MEETING OF 2/14/13

By Ron Vaughan

. There was some concern over the date of this meeting falling on Valentine's Day, that many would be absent due to attending special private dinners with their sweet hearts. However, it was decided to go ahead with it, due to possible confusion of a date change. Mike and I purchased some potted flowers to decorate the tables, and give to any ladies that would show up. As it was, we had 14 persons present, and were glad to have four ladies attend.

. Meeting Notes: 1) Dues need to be paid to be a voting member. 2) Treasurer Walt reported our balance is \$1789. 3) Those planning to attend the Cruise Conference need to make arrangements with Carnival to deposit \$300. 4) Wayne Scott will be taking part in a re-dedication of the Lincoln bust in the Education Credit Union on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. 5) Mike announced that Parker Hill's and a friend used ground penetrating radar to seek the site of the river boat "Glory" that was sunk during the opening operations of the Vicksburg Campaign. They believe they found it, 14 feet underground, in what used to be the channel of the Mississippi, near Bruinsburg. 6) Patty announced the Gibson Ranch re-enactment the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of May. Also, she spoke of the upcoming meeting schedule: March- Jimmy Collier will play banjo music of the time period. April- Don McCue (form the Lincoln Shrine in Redlands), May- ?, Sept-?, Oct- Tim Springer.

. Program: Lisa Peters gave a presentation on Civil War Soldier's Cuisine, complete with an 11 page handout full of information, recipes, and pictures. Discussion was encouraged, so we had a lively meeting, and she provided samples of hardtack, ginger bread, and ginger cookies for us to enjoy—well not the first mentioned hardtack! Some of the information Lisa shared follows:

U.S Army manuals prescribed the daily ration for a soldier as 12 oz of pork or bacon, or 1 lb 4oz of salt or fresh beef; 1 lb of hard bread or 6 oz of soft bread or flour. For every 100 men, were issued 15 lbs of dried peas or beans, 12 lbs of corn or hominy, 30 lbs of potatoes (when practicable), 10 lbs roasted coffee beans or 1 ½ lbs of tea, 15 lbs of sugar, 4 qts of vinegar, 3 lbs of salt, 4 oz of pepper, and 1 qt of molasses.

. This "generous" allowance was not always received, due to problems with ineffective supply personnel, cheating providers, and interruptions in the supply chain, and diversions of food in favor of ammunition in the wagon trains supplying the men in the field. Soldiers could supplement their diet by buying from suttlers or local farm-

ers, care boxes from home or from the Sanitary Commissions, or foraging.

. The Confederate Army used the same commissary regulations, but the Southern soldiers suffered from a lack of some menu items due to the Union blockade, shortages, and transportation difficulties. Instead of coffee, Southerners substituted chicory, burnt corn, peas, peanuts, and even acorns they foraged. Many times there were shortages of flour, so cornmeal was used instead. Also, instead of beans or peas, the famous "goober peas" (peanuts) were consumed. On many occasions soldiers on both sides were on half rations, but especially in the South.

. The commissary diet was deficient in vitamins due to the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables. Union soldiers could be issued "desiccated" (dehydrated) vegetables, but cooking destroys the vitamin A and C. In order to prevent scurvy, the Sanitary Commission tried to provide the troops with the fresh produce whenever possible. Hospitals often served lemonade to the patients. The poor food was frequently infested with weevils, maggots, and such, which caused disease. Another factor was the inexperience of the soldiers in cooking—they considered cooking as "women's work!" All of this resulted in high rates of dysentery, and other maladies. Lisa pointed out that one positive result of the soldier's love for coffee, was that at least the water they consumed was boiled, and therefore sanitary!

## **CIVIL WAR HUMOR**

From "The Blue and Gray Laughing"

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**"The people of Virginia have very queer ideas about our soldiers, and some of them are amusing. Among the cavalymen who made a raid on Wytheville, was a certain Captain Y---, who has a remarkable fondness for buttermilk as a beverage, and who is in the habit of calling for it constantly at the farmhouses he passes when on a scout. On the road to Wytheville he, with others, halted before a respectable-looking house, when they were met at the door by the frightened inmates with cries of, 'The Yankees have come!' One of them, a 'virgin on to forty,' stretched forth her hands and with the most imploring gestures exclaimed, 'Gentlemen, burn my house, destroy my property, do what you will- but spare my honor!'"**

. **'Confound your honor!' said the irate Captain Y---. 'Have you got any buttermilk?'"**

# ARTICLE REVIEW

By Ron Vaughan

. I was intrigued by an article in the April, 2013 issue of Civil War Times, "Was War Inevitable?" Author Jamie Malanowski, asserts that six men might have prevented the Civil War, or delayed it, saving the lives of hundreds of thousands. He states, "Americans had been dogging war over slavery for 30 years. Could they have squeezed out another 20 years of peace...? A catalyzing event was necessary to make secession seem possible, and there had to be an election that the Secessionists could construe as a threat." Also, if the Secessionists were not united and the U.S. Government reacted passively, the chain of events would have been broken. Here are the six moments when the war might have been avoided:

. 1) Secretary of War John Floyd ignored a detailed warning by informants of John Brown's Harper's Ferry plot. If Brown had been arrested ahead of time, there would have been no controversial raid that inflamed public opinion in the North and South.

. 2) U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Israel Green commanded the detachment that assaulted the Harper's Ferry Engine House, and stabbed John Brown in the chest. It would have been a fatal wound, but Green had hastily grabbed his dress sword, which only bent double. If John Brown had been killed, there would have been no sensational trial, where Brown cast himself as a heroic martyr, and the whole nation followed the trial in the press. According to Malanowsky, the raid frightened the South, and "Secession began to seem like the only way the South could insure its own self-preservation."

. 3) "At the start of 1860, it was widely assumed that the next President would be Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois." The author believes that if Douglas had campaigned more vigorously in New York, he would have won the state, and prevented Lincoln's Electoral College majority. The choice would have been thrown to the House of Representatives, where the democratic majority would have picked a Democrat, although probably not Douglas. A Democrat in the White House would have diffused the Secessionists.

. 4) "Late in November, 1860, President Buchanan convened his Cabinet to discuss secession. He had an ingenious plan to create a constitutional speed bump by calling a convention of the states, ... to discuss an amendment that would permit secession." A convention would offer a democratic vote to resolve the secession question. The author asserts that the "Southern leaders would have risked looking entirely unreasonable had they refused an open-handed invitation to discuss this process... A national convention would also have provided a place where pro-Unionists of every stripe could have come together and shown how greatly they outnumbered the hot-heads." Buchanan could not get the Cabinet to support him, and the idea died.

. 5) Captain John McGowan, was in command of the steamship "Star of the West" bring troops and supplies to Fort Sumter on Jan. 9, 1861. When Charleston batteries opened fire on the ship, he turned back. In the absence of bloodshed, both sides ignored the incident. Malanowsky contends that if he had persisted, and lives had been lost in an exchange of fire, the war would certainly have started that day. In January there was no Confederacy yet. "There was still considerable reluctance in Virginia and Tennessee to throw in with the Fire-Eaters of South Carolina at that juncture, and given that South Carolina had initiated hostilities, the Rebels might have received little support from other Southern states."

. 6) "Georgia was the wealthiest and most populous of the Deep South, and it was key to making the Confederacy work. But secession was an iffy thing in Georgia, especially since large parts of the state had few slaves." The divided state legislature decided to leave the question of secession up to a January 16<sup>th</sup> convention, with a state-wide vote. Well before the all the results were in, the "Atlanta Daily Intelligencer" reported that an "overwhelming majority" voted in favor of secession, and Governor Joe Brown pocketed the actual results and confirmed that projection. However, Malanowsky writes that historian Michael Johnson "concluded that an honest count would likely have given the anti-secession side a thin majority of 2,000 votes... a poor basis on which to justify the radical step of secession."

