



**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
BUGLE CALLS, JUNE, 2017**

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1. NO JUNE OR JULY MEETING!

NEXT MEETING IS AUGUST 12TH AT THE CLAGUE'S
CABIN

Rock Haven, Cabin #13 Shaver Lake

BARBEQUE POT LUCK: Last name A-L bring salad, M-Z
dessert

Call Brian & Linda for RSVP & directions (559) 284-4969

Program to be determined.

2. No President's Message

Mike Green is on vacation in Norway, searching his ancestral roots.

3. AFTER ACTION REPORT

SJVCWRT MEETING OF MAY 11TH 2017

BY RON VAUGHAN

*Ten persons were present. It is vexing that once again the Fresno Bee failed to put a mention of our meeting and topic in the events section of the paper. I had sent a letter direct to the Editor.

*We discussed the proposal to host the 2018 West Coast CWRT Conference. It would be best to find a location in Fresno, where more members could help with the preparations and activities. The Topic is to be the Trans-Mississippi, a much neglected theater of operations.

*Dr. Clague will do presentations in the Medical Tent at the October Kearney Park. Patti's plan is to have a table inside the tent where we can advertise our club.

*Our Speaker was Mike Gatley MD. His topic was "The Union Blockade and the Repercussions on the Southern Economy." He had such a bad experience a few years ago, with the Power Point projector distorting his images into bizarre colors (making Lee look like a space alien). So he provided printed copies of his speech for all to follow his talk.

On April 19, 1861, President Lincoln issued a “Proclamation of Blockade Against Southern Ports.” Mike asserted that by doing this, Lincoln had essentially already won the war, in only seven days!

He said this, because the South did not have the resources and internal economy necessary to support a lengthy war.

After explaining the international legalities of a blockade, Mike detailed the Union effort to actually implement it, in other words, effectively blockading the South’s 3,500 mile coast with 180 possible ports. At the beginning of the war, the Union Navy had only 42 active ships and 48 laid up. Half were outdated sailing ships. In 1861, 80 steamers and 60 sailing ships were added to the Union Navy. By the end of 1862, there were 282 steamers and 102 sailing ships. By the end of the war, the U.S. Navy had become the largest in the world, with 671 vessels, with over 50,000 sailors. In addition there was the U.S. Army Riverine Navy, that opened up the Mississippi River, and greatly hindered the Confederates ability to transport cargos of horses, beef, and other food, from the Trans-Mississippi Theater to aid the Central and Eastern Theaters. As the blockade matured, the types of blockade runner ships able to make a successful run, were small fast steamers, poorly suited to carry large amounts of heavy weapons, metals, and other supplies badly needed by the South.

The Blockade runners preferred to bring in profitable luxury items, such as silks, laces, spices, molasses, liquor, sugar, coffee, and tea. What the South needed was machinery, salt, zinc, iron, steel, and copper, but these were heavy and bulky, and produced much smaller returns. Without the blockade runners, the Confederacy would have been without much needed arms, and ammunition. At least 400,000 rifles, 3,000,000 pounds of lead (for bullets), and 3/2s of the salt peter required for gunpowder were smuggled through the blockade.

The blockade runners returned to Europe with cargos of southern cotton and tobacco. But this could not make up for the loss of ocean going freighters. The southern revenue loss was up to \$700,000,000 during the war, from decreased raw cotton exports. Over 2,700 round trips of blockade runners were successful between 1862 and 1865, but before the war, an average of 1,900 vessels a year sailed into New Orleans alone. Although the majority of the blockade runners were successful, the number of attempts decreased dramatically during the war, from 3,579 in 1861, to only 723 in 1864. Some 1,100 blockade runners were captured and 300 destroyed.

Mike pointed out a seldom appreciated fact, that the South had heavily relied upon coastal and riverine shipping to transport goods. Without the use of water transport, the South only had its limited rail road network, which was not

equal to the task, to take up the slack. The South was self-sufficient in food production, but the production areas were scattered and often the scene of fighting. The lack of transportation meant that Confederate troops often were hungry. Many food items that had been imported were now scarce: Coffee, tea, spices, apples, dairy products, citrus fruits, and some vegetables. Sugar production dropped from 270,000 tons in 1861 to only 5,400 tons three years later. Meat became scarce, due to the difficulty of transporting it from the trans-Mississippi, and being cut off from prewar sources in the North. Salt became scarce too. Without salt they could not preserve meat. Mid-19th Century Americans consumed annually about 50 pounds of salt per capita. Salt production in the United States was concentrated in the North or from Wales. Throughout the war, the South produced enough food for civilians and soldiers, but it had growing difficulty in moving surpluses to areas of scarcity and famine.

CONCLUSION:

The impact of the blockade upon the rail system was two-fold: The closing of water routes put more burden on the rail system, while the increased traffic wore out the equipment faster. The blockade eliminated the possibility of importing materials to maintain the railroads.

Confederate Officer wrote that “desertions are becoming amazingly numerous, and ...the main cause of this

dissatisfaction...is the insufficiency of rations. Our men do not get enough to eat.” General Joseph Johnston said, “we, without the means of purchasing supplies of any kind, or procuring or repairing arms, could continue this war only as robbers or guerillas.”

Jefferson Davis was unprepared both by experience and temperament for the executive position he occupied. He had no conception of how to wage a modern war, with its need to mobilize the nation’s resources and measure them realistically against those of the enemy.

The Union blockade was a powerful weapon that eventually ruined the Southern economy, at the cost of very few Union lives.

4. CIVIL WAR HUMOR:

From “Blue & Gray Laughing”

“A Yankee puffer having stated that Hooker’s headquarters are in the saddle, the Mobile Advertiser observes: ‘To think of a general that didn’t know his hindquarters from his headquarters expecting to whip General Lee.’”

5. CIVIL WAR CONFERENCES:

*The 2017 West Coast CWRT Conference, hosted in Sacramento, has released their program: The theme is

“Lesser Known Battles.” The speakers are Jack Davis, Thomas Cartwright, Ted Savas, Jim Stanberry, Brian Wills, Ron Perisho, and Mike Oddinino.

*Last weekend, Linda and I traveled way down south to Temecula, for the one day Civil War history conference, put together by Sarah Kay Bierly. The theme was “1862 Search for Victory” There were six speakers, and they were all great. Especially stirring, was David Dixon’s discussion of Georgia Blacks. Especially interesting was the story of Rachel, a slave woman, who became very wealthy by hiring out her time, eventually renting a hotel, and then sub renting it. She also helped Union prisoners by bring food and helping them escape.

Meg Groeling spoke about Dr. Letterman’s contributions to improving medical care. Michael Shaffer came out from Georgia to tell about Andrew’s railroad raid. Michael Oddinino discussed the Peninsula Campaign. Bruce Smith told the story of General Grant at Shiloh. Sarah ended the day with stories of the Christmas of 1862, through letters from soldiers.

*The last two weeks of April, My cousin David, his wife Carol, and I traveled East for two Tours led by Ed Bearss. Four days at Gettysburg, and five days later a three day tour of Antietam. In between, we drove to Richmond and Petersburg. Here we were treated to a personal tour by Edward Alexander (Who spoke at our 2015 con.) I have

been to all these battlefields before, but encountered places I had not seen before, some are not on any map at all. For example, I finally was able to see the “stony Knoll” at Gettysburg where the Irish Brigade fought, not on any map. Another spot at Gettysburg is “Lost Avenue.” There are Regimental markers, but it is surrounded by private land, with No Trespassing signs! Ed Bearss was amazing! At almost 95, he would walk to the bus with unsteady steps and his cane. But on the battlefields, he would step off at 75 to 80 yards a minute! It was as if he lost 30 years when he stepped onto the battlefields! Perhaps the message is: Follow your passion! His passion is certainly Civil War history!