

BUGLE CALL ECHOES



Vol. 8 No. 8, August 2000

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

Knowing in part may make a fine tale, but wisdom comes from seeing the whole.

AUGUST PROGRAM

Bob Ritchey, a member of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table, will speak to the group at its August meeting on Thursday, August 31, 2000.

His topic: *Lofty Goals, Resolute Struggle and Deep Disappointments.*

Bob was born in Kern County, California and raised in McFarland, attending both the elementary and high schools there. He developed his interest in history in classes at Pepperdine. Now semi-retired, his occupations have included farming, service stations, purchasing agent and sales.

Bob has three children and eight grandchildren. His goal in life is to be the best Grandpa ever.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As you may already know, Ken Moats underwent surgery several weeks ago and is recuperating at home. We wish him a continued uneventful recovery and look forward to seeing his column in September.

ELIZABETH MASSER THORN

by Mary Kuza, Springvale, ME

Imagine if you can the horror of returning to your home after a battle and discovering the yard carpeted with dead. Your home had been used as a hospital and blood covered nearly every surface. This is the sight that greeted Elizabeth Thorn when she returned to her home in Gettysburg on July 7, 1863. She may have wished that she had never left Germany.

Elizabeth was born in Eicheldorf, Germany, on December 28, 1832, and immigrated to

August 2000 MEETING

The August meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table will be held on Thursday, August 31, 2000, at the Ramada Inn, Shaw Avenue and Highway 41 in Fresno.

A no-host social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and the program at 7 p.m.

Please send your check for \$15 (\$10 for students under 25) to cover the cost of the meal to Gloria Carter, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755, or call 559/322-9474 to advise her you will be attending the meeting.

the United States in 1854. According to family lore, when the family left Ellis Island, a helpful citizen offered to carry their baggage—and then made off with all of it.

In 1855 she had married Peter Thorn and in 1856 Peter accepted the job as caretaker of Evergreen Cemetery in Gettysburg. It then paid \$150 a year. In 1862 Peter joined the 138th Pennsylvania, which was at Harpers Ferry and Washington, DC, during the Gettysburg Campaign. Elizabeth cared for her family and filled in at Peter's job while he was in the army. Living in the gatehouse with her were her 63-year old parents, Catherine and John Masser, and her three sons, Fred (7), George (5) and John (2). Elizabeth was also 6 months pregnant when war came to Gettysburg.

On June 26, Elizabeth had her first encounter with the Confederates when six

men rode up to the cemetery and fired their guns in an attempt to frighten the people. The men then rode up to the gatehouse, drawn by the smell of fresh baked bread, and Elizabeth began to slice the bread to feed the hungry men.



The Cemetery Gatehouse

By July 1, the two armies had converged upon Gettysburg and Elizabeth watched some of the opening action from the second floor of the gatehouse. As the Union army retreated through town from McPherson's Ridge, cannon were positioned in the cemetery. An officer from General Howard's staff rode up to the gatehouse and requested someone to go with him to assist in identifying the roads. Feeling this would be too strenuous for her father, Elizabeth went with the officer and walked through farm fields to point out the Harrisburg Road, York Pike, and Huntertown Road. Later that night she cooked supper for Generals Howard, Sickles and Slocum. The midnight supper was made up of two good-sized dough cakes, pancakes, three pieces of meat, apple butter and coffee. Before they left, General Howard told her to pack up her good things and he would send two men to carry them to the cellar. He also advised they would begin fighting near 4 a.m. and to take refuge in the cellar.

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When the shelling began near dawn on July 2, seventeen people huddled in the cellar for more than 3 hours while cannon thundered overhead. General Howard then ordered everyone to leave the house and "get as far in 10 minutes as possible." The family made their way safely south along the Baltimore Pike to the Musser farm near Rock Creek. Near midnight Elizabeth and her father returned to their home but were stopped by a guard who told them they could enter the gatehouse but not to use any light as it would disturb the wounded men in the house. Feeling their way in the darkness, they were able to find a shawl and a quilt and then returned to the Musser farm.

On the morning of July 3, Elizabeth tried to get her family farther away from the embattled town. Walking further south along the Baltimore Pike, they came to the White Church and found several people from town already gathered there. They decided to take refuge at Henry Beitler's farm and stayed there for the next four days.

On July 7 her little boys spotted some of their furniture on Union wagons passing down the Pike. It was time to return home. On the way back to the gatehouse, Elizabeth ran into David McConaughy who was president of the cemetery. He urged her to "Hurry on home. There is more work for you than you are able to do."

Elizabeth's comment of "Oh my" when she first saw her home seems mild considering the devastation. Very little glass remained in any of the windows and many of the frames were knocked out. All her things that had been packed away in the cellar were gone. Only three featherbeds remained and they were full of blood and mud. Doctors had used the beds to perform amputations. The grounds were

covered with dead men and horses and the stench was overpowering. She counted 15 dead horses in front of the gatehouse and 19 more within the cemetery. With the help of three other women, Elizabeth tried to put her home back together. It took four days of constant washing to clean the gore and mud from the featherbeds. She then received a note from McConaughy stating that it had been decided to bury the soldiers in Evergreen Cemetery and he directed her to mark off lots and dig graves as fast as she could.

This seemed a daunting task for a woman who was 6 months pregnant and had only her elderly father to help, but she began to mark off the lots. While her father finished digging one place, she began another. Soldiers continued to be buried in Evergreen Cemetery until the National Cemetery was ready; in this time she and her father had buried 105 soldiers.

Three months after this ordeal, Elizabeth gave birth to a baby girl, Rosie Meade. Her husband survived the war and returned home to Gettysburg. Both Peter and Elizabeth Thorn died in 1907 and are buried at Evergreen Cemetery. She was never compensated for her work or the loss of her family possessions.

Reprinted from *First Call*, the newsletter of the Joshua L. Chamberlain Civil War Roundtable of Brunswick, ME. Photo of the Cemetery Gatehouse from the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, (reproduction no. LC-B8171-2388 DLC).

SF CIVIL WAR SITES

Places in San Francisco which are connected with the Civil War:

- **Ft. Point**, located underneath the Golden Gate Bridge. Its museum houses a collection of Civil War artifacts.

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- **Ft. Mason**, Franklin Street and McArthur Avenue. During the Civil War, the US Army occupied the area. Building C houses the African-American Historical and Cultural Society and includes the history of black Californians in the war. John C. Fremont's home was once located behind the current Visitor's Center.

- **Presidio Cemetery**. Buried here are General Irvin McDowell, Pauline Cushman and Senator Edward Baker (see following story).

- **Alcatraz**, San Francisco Bay. First used as a prison during the Civil War.

- **Ghirardelli Square**. Civil war uniforms were made in the square's oldest building, The Woolen Mill, in 1864.

- **Lucas, Turner and Company Bank**, Montgomery and Jackson Streets. William Tecumseh Sherman headed the bank's operation at this location from 1853 to 1857.

- **Union Square**, Geary and Powell Streets. San Francisco's first mayor, John W. Geary, made this area a public square. Geary became a general during the war. In 1860, the public square was named Union Square as meetings supporting the union were held here.

- **Tomb of Thomas Starr King**, First Unitarian Church. King is best known for raising funds for the Sanitary Commission during the war and for his constant support of the Union.

SF NATIONAL CEMETERY

San Francisco National Cemetery is located in the Presidio of San Francisco, one of the oldest military installations in the United States and first national cemetery on the West Coast.

The cemetery was established pursuant to War Department General Order No. 133, dated 12 December 1884. This order designated 9.5 acres of land including a previously established post cemetery as the San Francisco National Military Cemetery. Subsequent accretions of land from the Presidio area have increased its size to the present 28.34 acres.

The setting aside of a portion of the Presidio as a national cemetery marked the establishment of the first such cemetery on the Pacific coast, and further evidenced the growth and development of a system of national cemeteries extending beyond the area of conflict of the Civil War.

Initial interments in the San Francisco National Cemetery included remains of decedents interred in the original post cemetery, as well as those removed from cemeteries at several abandoned forts and camps along the Pacific Coast and other parts of the far west. Re-interment from these sources included remains from Forts Halleck and McDermitt in Nevada; Fort Yuma, California; Forts Colville and Townsend, Washington Territory; and Camp Crittenden and Fort McDowell, Arizona Territory. Records of those whose remains were re-interred from the cemeteries of these abandoned camps and forts indicate dates of death ranging from the late 1850s through the period of the early 1890s. The strife and tumult of the great civil conflict of 1861-1865 must have seemed remote indeed to many of the officers and men of the United States Army

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who manned the garrisons of these remote outposts.

Life in the defensive outposts of an expanding nation had its dangers and hardships, even as did life in the camps and battlefields of a nation at war. Reports of causes of death available for some of those who served in the forts and camps frequently indicate death from drowning, gunshot wounds and attacks by Indians and bandits. Loneliness, too, may have been a contributing factor in the deaths of personnel in the frontier posts. Not infrequently the old records indicate suicide as the cause of death.

By Act of Congress of 3 March 1873, burial privileges in national cemeteries were extended to soldiers, sailors and marines who served during the Civil War and died subsequent to the passage of the Act. Veterans of the Civil War living on the West Coast were thus eligible for burial in the San Francisco National Cemetery.

The grave of **Major General Irvin McDowell**, Commander of the Union forces at the first Battle of Bull Run, Manassas, Virginia, in 1861, is in this cemetery. After the war, General McDowell was the commanding General of the Pacific Division, Western Defense command, and subsequent to his retirement in 1882, was the park commissioner of San Francisco. At his death on 4 May 1885, he was interred in Section OS Grave 1 Plot 1 of this cemetery.

San Francisco National Cemetery is also the burial place of **Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker**. His gravesite can be found in OSD Grave 488. Colonel Baker was a well known political and military personage of the early period of the Civil War. This officer was killed on 21 October 1861 while leading his troops at the Battle of Ball's

Bluff near Leesburg, Virginia. He had served in the Illinois State Legislature, also as a United States Congressman from that state. Colonel Baker was a personal friend of President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's second son, Edward Baker Lincoln, who died in 1850, was named for his friend. Colonel Baker emigrated to the west from Illinois in 1852, became a well known lawyer in California, subsequently went to Oregon, and was serving in the United States Senate from Oregon when he entered the Union Army.

Following elaborate funeral ceremonies in Washington, Colonel Baker's remains were interred in the Laurel Hill Cemetery, San Francisco, where they remained until 1940 when that cemetery became a part of a real estate development. The remains of Colonel Baker and his wife were then re-interred in their present location at this cemetery on 21 May 1940. The remains of a son, Edward Baker Jr., Major, U. S. Army, who died on 25 January 1883, were also re-interred in the same grave with his parents.

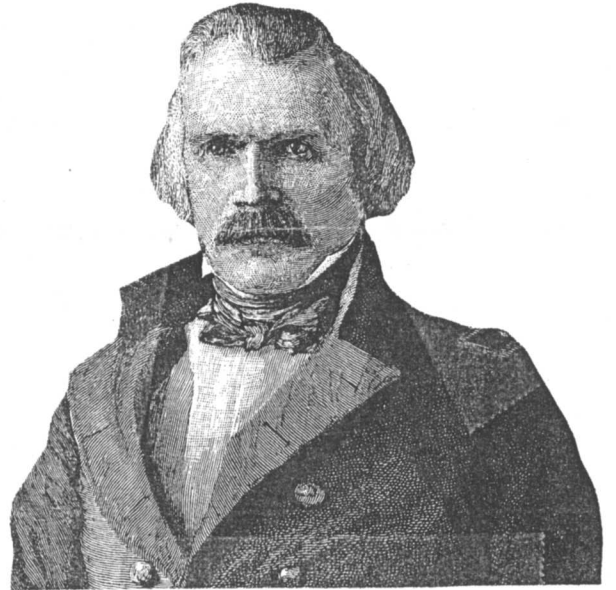
Pauline Cushman Fryer is interred in Section OS Plot 18 Grave 1. A small white marble headstone is on her grave. Biographical accounts indicate that Ms. Cushman was an actress of reputed beauty and charm in the 1860s and while touring in the South during the Civil War was a sometime espionage agent for the Union Army.

Ms. Cushman was accorded the brevet rank of Major for her espionage agent activities. She resumed her stage career and after the war, lectured on her war time experiences. She married three times, and at the time of her death in San Francisco on 2 December 1893 was the wife of Jerry Fryer, an Arizona sheriff. The Grand Army of the Republic arranged for her interment with full military honors in a private cemetery.

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Re-interment of her remains in the section OS Plot 18 Grave 1 of this cemetery was accomplished in 1907.

The above information was taken from a brochure available at the National Cemetery at The Presidio in San Francisco.



Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Bill Head writes that he recently finished reading the book *Tara Revisited: Women, War and the Plantation Legend* by Catherine Clinton.

Catherine Clinton, a research associate at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute at Harvard University, is the author of several books on the history of the South, including *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South*; *The Other Civil War*; *Portraits of American Women*; *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*; and *Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past*. Ms. Clinton lives with her husband and two sons in Riverside, Connecticut. She has appeared on various segments of *Civil War Journal*.

Bill states that the photos in *Tara Revisited* are worth the price of the book. He purchased his paperback copy at Borders.

THE NOVEMBER CONFERENCE – SHILOH

What will happen? Is it for me?

by Paul Ruud

The answers to the two questions posed above are "lots" and "yes;" let me explain both answers. Only a very small number of us has ever attended a three day conference on anything, much less the Civil War. In truth, it's not really three days; it goes from about dinner on Friday evening through lunch on Sunday, so it is less than 48 hours of real clock time.

Let me start by jogging your memory on the out-of-area speakers. ...Wiley Sword (is) considered by many to be the pre-eminent authority on the Battle of Shiloh. His book, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, would be an excellent read in preparation for the Conference. The other non-round table member speakers...(are) Herman Hattaway (a replacement speaker for Charles Roland, who had bypass surgery and cannot attend), Stacey Allen, Brian Wills, and Jim Stanbery.

Friday's activities will start in the afternoon with registration. This is the process where each attendee picks up an information packet, name tags, pays for any extra meals, and generally gets information and has questions answered.

Registration will be ongoing from Friday afternoon through Saturday morning at a minimum. The scheduled activity will begin with a no-host bar social hour. This takes place in the Conference Center of the Doubletree, the bar being set up just outside the banquet room. The social hour will be followed by dinner and the first presentation which we expect to be made by Wiley Sword.

Saturday is a full day for the conference.

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Among the early presentations will be an overview of the events leading up to the Battle of Shiloh, the battle itself, and then the events following the battle. This framework will refresh your memories and facilitate appreciation of all that is to follow. The day will be filled with presentations by all the speakers, each lasting roughly an hour which would include some questions. The conference will adjourn about four o'clock to provide a short break before the evening program. Saturday evening will pretty much be a repeat of Friday except the presentation following the dinner will be a panel discussion by our distinguished speakers. Each will give his answers to questions provided by our conference committee. Also featured before dinner on Saturday evening will be the 6th California Band, which will explain and then play selected melodies of the Civil War era.

Sunday will kick off early like Saturday and you can expect another presentation from each of our four headlined speakers. This will all end at about one o'clock and will have included a brunch somewhere along the way.

I have been fortunate enough to attend the 14th and 15th Annual Conferences. Each followed essentially this same format, and each was inspiring and captivating. Some things that you may be thinking:

Saturday looks like a long day just sitting and listening to speakers! It is a long day, but it won't seem that way! The story being told is spellbinding, the breaks are frequent, and the opportunity to interact with speakers and conference attendees doubles the interest. Coffee will help you over critical spots.

What do I get for \$150? That's a healthy chunk of change, but I believe you get full value and then some. From a "big picture"

perspective, there will never be another opportunity to participate in a conference on this subject with these speakers and participants. Each conference has an identity of its own and by the end of the weekend, it feels like a friend. More specifically, you get two dinners, two lunches, and the opportunity to listen to, meet and question national authorities on the Civil War. You will become even more motivated to dig deeper into this important era of American history. There will be coffee, opportunities to buy Civil War books and memorabilia, a chance at excellent prizes in several raffles, and of course an invitation to enjoy the luxury of the Doubletree and the company of our Round Table members.

Will Californians' roles in the Civil War be recognized? Yes, Blaine Lamb of SCWRT will present the California story. A recognition of Veterans' Day will be made by Phil Avila of North Bay CWRT.

The above was excerpted from *The Battle Cry*, the newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Roundtable.

GEORGIA HERITAGE TRAILS

by Dr. Gerald J. Smith

President, Board of Trustees

Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails, Inc.

Thanks to hundreds of local volunteer citizens throughout our entire state, Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails, Inc. ("GCWHT") is making great strides. Patterned after the overwhelmingly successful Virginia Civil War Trails, Inc. program, GCWHT is a "grass-roots" all-volunteer, nonprofit, tax exempt organization. Over the next several years, six distinct Civil War "driving trails" will be created, chronicling the rich heritage of Georgia's most tumultuous years. EVERY region of Georgia will be included...not just some...from Trenton to St. Mary's, and from

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Bainbridge to Clayton. Not only will Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails interpret significant military activities of the war, but much of the era's important social, economic and political history as well. Our entire state is rich in heritage.

GCWHT is comprised of local volunteer residents, who first identify, select, then actually write the text for interpretive markers in their respective communities, either alongside or very near existing roads once traveled by the soldiers wearing Blue or Gray. A volunteer "History Committee", comprised of area citizens and historians, assists as needed to properly compile and document this history. But who better than LOCAL citizens to interpret LOCAL history? This is why GCWHT is considered a "grass-roots" effort, because of our firm commitment to LOCAL involvement and LOCAL decision-making. Other volunteer committees are likewise comprised of local residents, who make decisions, not merely suggestions, for GCWHT to follow. GCWHT also works with various private organizations and public agencies at local, regional and state-wide levels, where desirable, to help implement our program. This is EXACTLY how Virginia Civil War Trails, Inc. has become so successful, and why they are widely acknowledged as "THE national leader" in Civil War driving trails.

Lest anyone believe that only certain aspects of Georgia's Civil War era heritage are being chronicled, please consider this fact. For more than twenty years, I have had the privilege of teaching at historically black Paine College in Augusta. Therefore, I know from first-hand experience the importance of Georgia's African-American heritage during the Civil War era. Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails is interpreting ALL aspects of our state's Civil War era heritage, both black and white, North and South, soldiers and civilians.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2000

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 27, 2000	Membership	<i>Show and Tell</i>
February 24, 2000	Robert Snowden/ Black History Month	<i>The Underground Railroad</i>
March 30, 2000	Cathy Rehart/ Women's History Month	<i>"A Twist of Fate"</i>
April 27, 2000	Fred Bohmfalk	<i>William Sherman: His Early Years</i>
May 25, 2000	Ken Bruce	<i>McClellan and the Seven Days Before Richmond</i>
June 29, 2000	Wayne Bowen	<i>Ella Carroll's Role in the Civil War</i>
July 27, 2000	Phil Avila	<i>Brush Strokes of War: A Slide Presentation of Civil War Art</i>
August 31, 2000	Bob Ritchey	<i>Lofty Goals, Resolute Struggle and Deep Disappointments</i>
September 26, 2000 Note date change! This is a Tuesday.	Bob Blair	<i>General George Thomas: The Battle of Nashville</i>
October 26, 2000	Vern Crow	<i>Thomas' Legion: One of the Most Unique Commands in the Civil War</i>
November 30, 2000	Dave Davenport	<i>The Battle of Stone's River</i>
December 2000	No regular meeting. A potluck and activity are planned.	

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please begin/renew my membership in the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table. My membership category is checked below:

Individual \$25 Family \$35 \$10 Student or Newsletter

Name _____

Address _____

Clip this membership form and send it with your check to the SJVCWRT, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755. The membership year is from January to December. Five dollars of each membership goes towards preservation.