

Bugle Call Echoes

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table
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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: Dave Davenport

6156 N Mitre Ave Fresno CA 93705

277-3283

davidpauldavenport@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Pattie Spencer

1548 W Vasser Ave Fresno CA 93705

233-1059 cell phone: 304-8170

Secretary: Phyllis Mann

4880 N Hulbert Ave #102

Fresno CA 93705 229-3778

pfm02@cvip.net

Publicity: Shaun Ardemagni

2580 E Los Altos Fresno CA 93710

299-7453 rampchamp@aol.com

Newsletter: Bob Quist [Judy]

504 E Magnolia Ave

Hanford CA 93230 582-9520

bquist1@sbcglobal.net

Directors: Mike & Gloria Carter

1576 E Cornwall Fresno CA 93720

mikecarter@paula.com

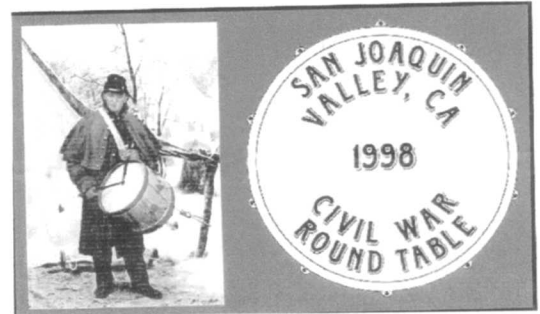
gloria.carter@cvcb.com

Past President: Tom Carr [Kathy]

2577 S Argyle Avenue

Fresno CA 93727

642-4204 carrt@yahoo.com



President's Message

For those able to attend the Symposium last week, there were generally positive responses. Our stepping into maintain the tradition of the annual West Coast Conference was much appreciated by all.

Unfortunately, many of our club members were not in attendance. We shall have to address that next year. There should be some way in which we can include many more members without a fee structure. After all, your club hosted this.

Our 2005 program concludes with the Christmas dinner at Tom Carr's home on Saturday, December 3rd. Don't miss this event. It is always of good cheer. We will have a speaker for the evening, Zoyd Lucy, who provided a most interesting program at the Symposium on Native American participation in the Civil War, particularly in Indian Territory and Texas.

Next year's program is already in progress. More later. Your Board wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a great start to the holiday season.

Brian Clague

'Andersonville' our best Civil War novel?

a review by Roger K. Miller from Chicago Sun-Times, Jan. 20, 2005

Space prevents using this review in its entirety so it liberally paraphrased. We thank Charlie Jorgensen for forwarding the article. If you would like to see the entire review let me know at bquist1@sbcglobal.net and I will see you get one. Editor Bob Quist

In 1955, when MacKinlay Kantor's *Andersonville* first came out, a reviewer for the Sun-Times called it "A great book, perhaps the greatest of all Civil War novels." Dozens of others echoed the assessment, including historians Henry Steele Commager and Bruce Catton.

Not so the academics. Nowadays Kantor scarcely merits even the back of their hand, but at the time of original publication they smote him for being sentimental, unsubtle, dependent on stereotypes, formulaic, etc.

There is a sense of unfairness about those reviews, even a deliberate lack of understanding. Kantor was regarded as a kind of Norman Rockwell of words. The point of a couple of academic reviewers' objections seemed to be that Kantor was not Ernest Hemingway, whose style and influence still held considerable sway. *Andersonville* is a long, sprawling, bulging, overreaching, but ultimately satisfying - honestly and legitimately satisfying - grab bag of a novel about the horrors of the Confederate prisoner of war camp in Georgia.

The prison provides unity to a story crowded with scores of characters, though only a couple handfuls of them carry it.

The novel opens in the fall of 1863 at the farm of Ira Claffey near Anderson, GA., to which Confederate officers have come to build a prisoner of war camp. Ira is a slave owner and a humane one. He was able to adapt to the great personal

and social upheavals the war has brought, but his wife, Veronica, could not. In fact, she goes mad with grief over the deaths of her three soldier sons.

At the beginning, the forest site of the future camp is pristine and beautiful. At the end, it is a reeking cesspool.

The first prisoners came in Feb. 1864, to what was then known by its official name, Camp Sumter, from the overcrowded, disease-ridden POW camp at Belle Isle, VA. They came to an essentially empty pen of bare, muddy ground. They had no housing, no kitchen, no toilets, no shade, no fuel, and no potable water.

Ira becomes increasingly appalled when more than 30,000 men were crammed inside the camp. His family is forced to burn smudge pots and wear cologne masks to endure the stench, which worsens as prisoners die in huge numbers of malaria, dysentery, and scurvy brought on by their diet of corn pone and filthy water.

When he and a minister, Cato Dillard, try to relieve the atrocity by taking vegetables and clothing to the camp, they are turned away, branded as Yankee sympathizers. Later, after the fall of Atlanta and the death of his wife, Ira attempts to reach Richmond to plead for the inmates.

Several characters were actual persons, most notable Capt. Henry Wirz, the camp superintendent who hates Yankees for the wound he received to his now constantly festering arm, and his superior, Brig. Gen. John Winder, who had authority over Confederate military prisons and callously, even eagerly, refused to see that they were adequately supplied.

Upon publication 50 years ago it immediately **outclassed** *Gone With the Wind*, and it continues to surpass challengers like Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels* and Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*.

2006 Memberships Due Now

Your 2005 membership year is from January to 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 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.

Please RSVP for our next meeting at the home of Tom and Kathy Carr on Sat, Dec. 3rd, by contacting Secretary Phyllis Mann at 229-3778 [afternoons and evenings, please] or online at pfm02@cvip.net

More Volunteers needed at Civil War Re-enactment

Hazzah and a tip of the kepi to all those who did double-duty [due to a lack of member response] at our booth at the Kearney Park Re-enactment on October 8 and 9.

P.S. Unless I change my mind for 2006, this position is up for grabs.

Pattie Spencer

Going for Historic Preservation

Conference Raffles Prove Profitable, Popular

By Ken Moats

Many attendees came away from the Conference pleased with their winnings from the many raffles and items won from the silent auction. Lunch and Dinner had between 15 and 20 donated books that were raffled off.

The Moats would like to thank Pattie Spencer and Shaun Ardemagni for all their support with money matters throughout the conference. Special thanks to Phyllis Mann and David Davenport, and other club members for securing and donating so many items.

During the West Coast Conference Ken had this to report:

Raffles, Donations, Matching Funds	\$2,381.00
Raffle Tickets from Kearney's Reenactment	260.00
Silent Auction	<u>160.00</u>
Total	\$2,801.00

Our Round Table challenged other round tables to donate \$100 or greater for battlefield preservation up to \$400.00.

Carrs' Host December Meeting

This is a potluck and everyone should bring their specialty dish. Kathy and I will do the meat (turkey and ham), soda, plates, silverware, and napkins.

Directions to Tom and Kathy's new home, which is near Clovis and Jensen in SE Fresno, are as follows:

From the north or west:

180 E till it deadends at Clovis Ave exit
R on Clovis about 2 1/2 miles to Church
L on Church till it deadends at Sunnyside
R on Sunnyside to Byrd
R on Byrd 1 block to Argyle
L on Argyle to 2577 S Argyle Ave (on left)

From the south (Visalia, Tulare, or Hanford)

99 to Clovis exit
N on Clovis about 5 miles to Church
R on Church till it dead ends at Sunnyside
R on Sunnyside to Byrd
R on Byrd 1 block to Argyle
L on Argyle to 2577 S Argyle Ave (on left)

If you get lost, phone Tom or Kathy at 268-2828.

MEMBERSHIP FORM - Membership year is from January to December 2006

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 Post Office Box below:

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

