



# BUGLE CALL ECHOES



Vol. 6 No. 9, October 1998

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

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

## PROGRAM NOTES

Fred Bohmfalk of Fair Oaks, who spoke to our round table on General Patrick Cleburne in May of 1997, will again be the featured speaker at a meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table. Fred will make a presentation at our October gathering on General Phil Sheridan, he of the fabled "Sheridan's Ride" poem by Thomas Buchanan Read.

Fred spent 22 years in the US Air Force in the Strategic Air Command. Retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel, Fred went on to a career with TRW in the Missile and Space and Avionics and Military Electronics divisions. Since retiring from TRW, Fred has continued working in a family-related business. He has had a life-long passion for history--in particular, Texas from 1800-1880, and the Civil War.

Fred is the current president of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table, which was founded in 1961. The Sacramento CWRT meets monthly at the Plaza Hof Brau in the capital city.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The weekend at Kearney Park, The Civil War Revisited, was a perfect blend of glorious weather and exhilarating, dramatic, informative and colorful historic events. This was the ninth annual living history event, sponsored by the Fresno City and County Historical Society, and the best yet in my opinion. I'd not have gone both days except for our booth there, but was glad I did. The extra time gave me the opportunity to wander slowly about and absorb the sights, color, sound and smell of it. Passing knots of Union soldiers bantering back and forth and singing together before battle made me feel that I had, indeed, entered a time machine.

Our booth at the reenactment is a way to let the public know that we exist, what we do, and

## OCTOBER MEETING

The October meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table will be held on Thursday, October 29, 1998, 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 Wayne Bowen, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755, or call Ken Moats at 229-3654 to advise him you will be attending the meeting.

Reservations are important.

to attract new members. Thanks to Mike Carter, Carol Berry, Rick Kubiak and Tim Johnson, who donated time to man the booth, and to Ken Moats for organizing it, being there, and transporting the equipment.

Thursday, October 29th, will be our last program of the year due to the November conference. We'll be voting on constitutional changes and a new slate of officers for the coming year(s). Fred Bohmfalk will be there to tell us about Phil Sheridan.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our Christmas get together on December 6. It will be held at the Clagues' home. More details to follow at a later date.

*Barbara Moats*

## THE BATTLE OF CHAMPION HILL

by Ron Vaughan

I have been interested in the Vicksburg campaign since my college days, when I poured through the "Official Records" instead of studying for exams! The battle of Champion Hill was the pivotal battle of the Vicksburg campaign, and it brings into sharp focus the differences between the opposing commanders--Grant and Pemberton. I used to have sympathy for Pemberton because of his dilemma with the conflicting orders of President Davis to hold Vicksburg at all costs; and General Johnston's desire to concentrate forces. However, a reading of Ed Bearss' book on the campaign opened my eyes. His three volumes have more information and detail than any other source.

On May 13, 1863, Pemberton had left 10,000 men to defend Vicksburg and concentrated 23,000 on the Big Black River. He planned to defend the Big Black, but considered attacking the Yanks in the rear if Grant advanced on Jackson. Some historians say that Pemberton had no cavalry, but actually he had two regiments. Pemberton received information confirming that Grant was moving on Jackson, but he did nothing.

On May 14, Pemberton received a message from Johnston ordering an attack on Grant's four (actually two) divisions at Clinton. But Pemberton became pessimistic, thinking that there were 20,000 Union troops at Clinton. He called a council of war. The majority of officers favored Johnston's plan. But General Loring proposed cutting Grant's line of communications (which did not exist) at Dillon, destroy Smith's division, and thereby diverting attention from Jackson. Since Pemberton thought the Clinton attack would be "suicide," he decided to adopt Loring's plan to appease the fire-eating officers that were eager for an advance. This decision is amazing since HE DISAPPROVED of it, only a MINORITY SUPPORTED it, and it was CONTRARY TO ORDERS of his SUPERIOR OFFICER! At 8:30 that night, Johnston received a dispatch from Pemberton which outlined his plan. Johnston saw "red!" He immediately dispatched a

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message reiterating his order for a concentration at Clinton.

Meanwhile, a spy brought Grant a copy of Johnston's May 13 orders. Grant reacted immediately. Early on the 15th (4 a.m.), Grant had his troops moving on the Jackson, Middle and Raymond roads, converging on Edwards. By nightfall he had seven divisions along a line from Bolton to Raymond.

On the 15th Pemberton also ordered an "early" 8 a.m. march, but due to blundering, there were insufficient rations and ammunition. This is an inconceivable oversight, since Pemberton had been planning operations in the area since the 7th. Railroad trains brought up the necessary supplies, and finally at 1 p.m. the march began. Adams' cavalry was in the van, followed by the divisions of Loring, Bowen and Stevenson, with the large wagon train bringing up the rear. The advance progressed on the Raymond Road for two miles to Baker's Creek, where they found the creek too swollen to ford. Nobody had thought to go ahead and check the route! Finally, at 4 p.m. Loring suggested the army detour north to the Jackson Road Bridge, go east to Champion Hill, then south on Ratliff Road to get back on the Raymond Road. By dusk Loring had reached the Raymond Road but Stevenson's troops did not arrive at Champion Hill until ten hours later and the wagons did not arrive until dawn.

So we see that Grant's men were not fatigued because they had started early and stopped early, while most of the Confederates would go into battle with little rest. Another problem was that Pemberton had little idea of the whereabouts of the 29 to 35,000 Union troops, but Grant had received a report from some railroad men that there were 25,000 (actually 23,000) Confederates at Champion Hill.

On the 15th, Grant ordered his corps commanders to "advance cautiously" along the three roads, with cavalry in the van and skirmishers on the flanks, to prevent an ambush. Meanwhile, Pemberton had received Johnston's second order to concentrate north of the RR. He had rejected his orders, wasted time, marched in the opposite direction, but now he decides to obey! He orders a reverse march to

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Edwards and the Brownsville Road. The problem with this was that there are 400 wagons with tired (and no doubt cross) teamsters at the head of the column. By the time the wagons got clear of the road, the Union army appeared, and it was too late to march as planned. McClernand's troops made contact first on the Raymond and Middle Roads but McClernand takes to heart Grant's orders for caution and does not press an attack. However, his troops do serve to pin down the Confederates and divert attention.

Stevenson had not put out pickets on the Jackson Road so when the Yanks appear he has to deploy quickly on Champion Hill. Hovey's Division arrived at the Champion house at 9:45 a.m. and the "Fighting Hoosier" wanted to attack immediately but Grant ordered him to wait for McPherson's men. By 10:30 Logan's Division had arrived and deployed. An Ohio boy asked Logan, "Shall we not unsling our knapsacks?" Logan replied, "No--damn them, you can whip them with your knapsacks on!" Logan and Hovey attacked with 10,000 men vs. Stevenson's 6 or 7,000 men spread in a thin line with no reserves. At first the Union attack stalled due to the rough terrain more than enemy fire. But Logan sent in his reserve brigade to outflank Stevenson, which forced him to stretch his line further. Finally by 1:30 the thin Confederate line was punctured and routed, with 16 cannon captured on the hill.

Meanwhile, Pemberton had ordered Loring and Bowen to attack to the east, but they were so contemptuous of Pemberton that they postponed the attack. This was a wise decision. Pemberton procrastinated until 1 o'clock, when he decided to reinforce Stevenson. He ordered Bowen and Stevenson to march north, but they refused due to the enemy to their front. Finally, he sent a "mandatory" order and Bowen's men marched north to Champion Hill. Ladies at the Robert's house sang Dixie and cheered the men as they marched past.

Bowen's Missouri and Arkansas men were the best fighters in the army. At 2:30 they attacked with a wild rebel yell! Some of Stevenson's broken troops rallied, "as if by magic," and joined the advance. Bowen's men smashed through the Union line, recaptured the lost artillery and threatened to

capture the Union supply train. A massed battery of 16 guns and Cocker's Division finally stopped the Confederate onslaught. Bowen's men were slowly pushed back.

To the south, McClernand's troops were still advancing cautiously, so Pemberton once again ordered Loring to move north, but Loring ridiculed the officer from Pemberton's staff, and declined to obey. Finally, a second aid explained to Loring the urgency of the situation, and Loring obeyed--but it was too late. All Loring could do was to cover the retreat. The Union had cut the Jackson Road so Pemberton had to retreat by the Raymond Road (the ford was now passable). Soon, Yankees advancing on the west side of Baker's Creek cut off Loring, forcing him to retreat away from Vicksburg.

The Confederate records are incomplete, but Pemberton reported the loss of 381 killed, 1,018 wounded, 2,441 missing, 27 cannon lost, plus the separation of Loring's Division. Grant lost 410 killed, 1,844 wounded, and 187 missing. Instead of holding the line of the Big Black, Pemberton's demoralized army retreated to Vicksburg and were shut up there. General JFC Fuller stated that Champion Hill should be considered one of the decisive battles of the war, because it made the fall of Vicksburg inevitable and doomed Richmond. While the latter seems an extreme statement, we must reflect that if Grant's Vicksburg campaign had failed, he certainly would never have been promoted to command the armies that eventually captured the Confederate capital.



Dorothea L. Dix

## CONFERENCE

Have you registered yet for the West Coast Civil War Conference? Don't miss this opportunity to hear Ed Bearss or the many other fine presenters on the schedule. Dates of the conference are November 6-8, 1998, at Tenaya Lodge, Fish Camp. For more information, call Bill Head at 432-8746.

## THE LINCOLN WOMEN

by Pat Perry

This August, Frank and I attended a symposium titled "The Lincoln Women, Five Generations of Triumphs and Tragedies," in Manchester, Vermont. It was put together by the staff of Hildene, which was Robert Todd Lincoln's home in Manchester. Women representing the five generations were Nancy Hanks Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston, Mary Todd Lincoln, Mary Harlan Lincoln, her two daughters and her granddaughters.

There is very little information on Nancy Lincoln and Sarah Lincoln, although all of the presenters seemed to think these women had a positive influence on Abraham Lincoln. There also doesn't seem to be much information on Mary Harlan Lincoln, Robert's wife, nor their two daughters. Their granddaughter, Mary Lincoln Beckwith, known as Peggy, lived in Manchester, NH most of her adult life, dying in 1975 at the age of 77. One of the presentations was given by her friends, giving their personal remembrances of her, which was quite interesting. She was one of the first women in NH to obtain her pilot's license. She ran Hildene as a dairy business and was well known in NH for the quality of her stock and her honesty in business transactions. She never married but remained close to her family. She was known for her love of animals and was a major benefactor to the community.

Of course, Mary Todd Lincoln was the main topic, and whether or not she was insane after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The general consensus was that while she was never actually insane, she was not rational when it came to money. She perceived herself as very needy and on the brink of poverty, although she had sufficient financial resources to live a comfortable life. She seemed to be quite rational if the subject did not concern her finances. The presenters all agreed that Abraham and Mary Lincoln had a happy, if somewhat stormy marriage. He was gone from the home often before being elected to the Presidency and it was up to Mary to manage the household and raise the children. Both were very loving and indulgent parents. Many of their contemporaries commented on how undisciplined the children were.

The presenters felt Mary Lincoln was the first wife of a President to try to take an active roll as First Lady. She gave her opinion, wanted or not, on political appointments and policies. Although sometimes criticized for it, she tried to make the White House and

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their entertainments special. She did a major refurbishing of the White House and had several impressive social events.

All of the presenters felt that Ann Rutledge was an important person in Lincoln's early life, although there was disagreement as to whether he was in love with her. Since she was engaged to another man during the time Lincoln knew her, it is quite doubtful that they had any type of affair. If he loved her it must have been from afar. There seems to be no doubt that he was very troubled by her death, but he was close to all members of her family and visited with them often. Her brother, Robert, even attended Lincoln's funeral in Springfield.

All in all it was an interesting symposium.

## NOTHING IN COMMON

by Ed Wonilowicz, Editor, Pipe Creek Circular

Lucky for us, we [in the Pipe Creek CWRT] have two events to enjoy in September which will surely beef up our store of Civil War knowledge. On Sunday the 13th, we'll walk in the footsteps of the men who made Pickett's Charge. On Wednesday, the 16th, we'll learn of Gouverneur K. Warren and his efforts to restore the good name won at Gettysburg and lost unjustly in the closing days of the war. I'm excited, but this wealth of history poses a dilemma--what to write in this space.

Usually I have the relatively easy task of picking one topic, trying to do it some justice and piquing your interest in attending our next meeting. So while I share your anticipation of having a Civil War double-dip this month, I still have this job to do. Let's see, Pickett and Warren, Warren and Pickett. EGADS! Where's the connection? Well, there's one big fat obvious--Gettysburg--but with the number of written words on that battle fast approaching Avogadro's number, I don't think I can add much that's fresh and new. Surely these men must have had something else in common. Both generals, both West Pointers, both struggled after the war to bolster their sullied reputations. But this is no Armistead/Hancock amazing-but-true story. No brother against brother here. These men just don't seem to match up in any compelling way.

As my brain lies smoldering unproductively, my wife rides to the rescue. "If they don't have anything in common, why don't you write about that?" Hmmm....Pickett, Warren, and millions of others! The stories of warring neighbors and close relations bound

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. The name of the organization shall be the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table.

Section 2. The purpose of this organization shall be to promote the study and discussion of all aspects of the American Civil War so that this part of our common heritage may be preserved for ourselves and our posterity and to actively support the preservation of Civil War sites and battlefields.

ARTICLE II - OFFICERS AND DUTIES

Section 1. The organization shall have the following elected officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. It shall also have a Board of Directors.

Section 2. President: The President shall be elected for a term of two years and may not serve more than two successive terms. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the organization and the Board of Directors, and to supervise the other officers and committee members in the carrying out of their duties. The President, with the approval of the Board, shall appoint the Chairman and members of all committees. Upon election of a new President the past President shall serve two years on the Board of Directors. In the event a President is reelected, the past President shall automatically become a member of the Board of Directors for another two-year term.

Section 3. Vice President: The Vice President shall be elected for a term of two years. It shall be the duty of the Vice President, in the absence of the President, to preside at all meetings of the organization and the Board of Directors. In addition the Vice President shall work in concert with the Program Coordinator in the scheduling and implementation of programs and in any other special duties assigned by the President.

Section 4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two years or until a successor has been elected. The Treasurer shall keep a record of all financial transactions, collect all dues and assessments and make payments of all expenses approved by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall make regular financial reports to the organization.

Section 5. Secretary: The Secretary shall be elected for a term of two years or until a successor has been elected. The Secretary shall take minutes at each Board or General meeting, and be responsible for keeping a record of all official communications.

ARTICLE III - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the elected officers, the two immediate past Presidents and four elected members and four elected members-at-large.

Section 2. The four elected members shall be elected for a term of two years.

Section 3. The Board of Directors shall meet at the call of the President, or upon a call of the majority of the Board. A majority of its members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. It shall arrange all meetings of the organization, approve all financial transactions, act upon all proposals for membership, and perform all other acts necessary for the preservation, prestige, and well being of the organization.

ARTICLE IV - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. The President shall appoint a nominating committee whose duty shall be to submit nominations for officers and the Board of Directors, prior to the election meeting of the organization's general membership. Nomination and elections may be held at the same meeting.

Section 2. In addition to the nominees presented by the nominating committee, nominations for all elected officers and Board members may be made from the floor.

Section 3. Elections shall be held at the last regular meeting of the year and the officers and Board members shall take office at the beginning of the next calendar year.

Section 4. The number of members in good standing present at a regular meeting of the membership shall constitute a quorum and a majority vote of the members present shall govern.

Section 5. Any vacancy occurring during the term of an elected officer or Board member shall be filled through appointment by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors.

#### ARTICLE V - SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Section 1. Special committees appointed by the President shall function at the pleasure of the President, and such committees shall cease to exist at the expiration of the President's term. Members of such committees may or may not be members of the Board.

#### ARTICLE VI - FISCAL YEAR

Section 1. The fiscal year shall be January 1 through December 31.

#### ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Section 1. Membership in this organization shall be open to all persons interested in furthering its purpose.

Section 2. The membership shall comprise the following classes: a) Regular members; b) Student members. Student status shall be available to any full- or part-time student under 25. Student members shall have full rights of membership.

Section 3. The dues shall be set by action of the Board of Directors and are for the calendar year. A portion of each member's dues shall be devoted to battlefield preservation.

Section 4. An individual may be dropped from membership if more than two months' delinquent.

#### ARTICLE VIII - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall determine all policies and procedures.

Section 2. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern at all meetings either of the membership or the Board of Directors, although it is the intention that meetings be as informal as decorum permits.

#### ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of all active members present at any meeting, provided that written notice of the proposed changes has been furnished to the membership in advance of the meeting at which the changes are to be acted upon.

Amended October 1998

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by everything except political ideology are the spark which starts many a burning interest in the Civil War, but still, in the big picture, these stories are rare. Brother against brother happened, but stranger against stranger, ordinary man against ordinary man--that's the real story. So in this context, Warren, Pickett, Johnny Reb, and Billy Yank all share a common experience, a defining moment, the crucible of their lives which was the Civil War.

Think for a moment. Start with the heroes, the household names. Would we ever have heard of Robert E. Lee? Would Grant have died a poor clerk in a harness shop? What of Warren? A bridge builder for the railroads maybe? And George Pickett was not the ideal candidate for a glorious career in the US Army, so without the Civil War, I just don't see him in the pages of history. The war made these men, made them larger than life. While this may not be true of the millions of dirty, footsore privates, corporals, and others, still they were largely defined by the war, gave it the flower of their lives, died on the field or lived to tell of other deaths. They gave us our history; they made our history. The fact that all of their names do not appear in books is a small matter. They were the Civil War. Famous or not, they all share this experience.

If you try, you can still get in touch with all of these men. In your mind, you can hear the sounds, feel the heat, the burn of black powder smoke. You can learn their stories, from the exalted hero down to the skulker, the straggler, cowed behind a rock, anticipating the death he knows is coming. But for the serendipity of time, it could have been you, or your brother, or the man down the road. Few of us know how we would react when faced with a storm of hot lead and jagged steel. Can we truly identify with the gallant charger or condemn the simpering coward? Whose place would we take?

To summon up the ghosts of the heroes and cowards, to talk to them and feel their fear and courage, I've always preferred the winter mornings. When quiet prevails and there is no crowd, the battles replay in my mind. Sometimes at Gettysburg, the Valley of Death is still strewn with corpses; men crouch shoulder to shoulder in Antietam's Bloody Lane. The acrid smoke still lingers in the air. Cries, shouts, and shots from skirmishers punctuate the hellish scene. There is no glory here. The dead private lies a few feet from the colonel or general. Which had last thoughts of gallantry? Which was but a hair's breadth from dropping his sword or musket,

## BUGLE CALL ECHOES

hugging the ground, preserving life at the cost of honor? Standing at the monuments to the heroes, I ask them how close they were to ignominious flight. Can they always have been brave? Didn't they feel the pull of home and how easy it would have been to turn their face from the enemy? Can I truly condemn those who ran or know with any confidence that I would have done my duty?

The heroes come up to us out of the haze of time. They were the men who found a strength to go forward. They channeled the enormous energy of fear; they feared failure more than death; they acted as ordered, and their lives have been preserved for posterity. Pickett, Warren, Lee, Chamberlain. The private from Cincinnati, a corporal from Mobile. But don't be quick to scorn the others. The first man to turn and start the great retreat a moment before may have been a hero. The man who picked up the fallen flag may have regretted doing so, may have entertained thoughts of dropping it, running, just before he was caught by the ball that made us judge him brave. All were men, all have a story, all deserve at least a small measure of the hero's reward. The celebrated and the anonymous share the common bond of war. None is truly larger than life, few are deserving of utter scorn. They are us, and we are them--only the time is different. We all share the bond of humanity with all its strengths and frailties. Remember them all, and honor their memories. They are your fathers, brothers and countrymen.

*The Pipe Creek Circular is the newsletter for the Pipe Creek Civil War Round Table of Carroll County, Maryland. The above article was used with permission.*

## PRESERVATION

Jerry Russell writes:

The word from Washington is that the "Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields, Technical Volume II,"...due to printing costs...was not intended for public distribution in book form; the printing was so limited that there are not even any copies available for purchase...thanks to the miracles of modern electronics, and the Internet, you can call it up by going to

[www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/battles/tvii.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/battles/tvii.htm)

So just download your own and pass it around.

**We Who Study Must Also Strive To Save!!!**

**OFFICERS/CONSTITUTION**

At the October meeting, the new slate of officers will be presented for acceptance by the membership. Nominations will be taken from the floor as well. If you are interested in serving on the board of the round table, this will be an opportunity to have your name placed "in the ring."

A copy of the proposed round table constitution is enclosed with this newsletter. This version of the constitution will be voted on at the October meeting.

**SJVCWRT OFFICERS FOR 1998**

<i>President</i>	Barbara Moats
<i>Vice President</i>	Mike Carter
<i>Secretary</i>	Mike Carter (temporary)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Wayne Bowen
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Carol Berry
<i>Historian</i>	Verne Cole
<i>Past President</i>	Bill Head
<i>Directors-at-Large</i>	Tim Johnson Ken Moats

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 1998**

The SJVCWRT's schedule of dates and speakers for the year is shown below. Mark your calendars so as not to miss any of these fine speakers. Schedule is subject to change.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Topic/Event</i>
October 29, 1998	Fred Bohmfalk	Phil Sheridan
November 6-8, 1998	Ed Bearss, Keynote Speaker	West Coast Civil War Conference Topic: Vicksburg
December 6, 1998	Christmas Get Together at the Clagues' home	



SJVCWRT  
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