



Bugle Calls



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

If you were one of the people that missed last month's meeting, you missed a great program about the Battle of Wilson's Creek. Ron Vaughn took us from the beginning of the Civil War in Missouri all the way through the battle. His power point program did a wonderful job of showing us some of the ground that the battle was fought over as well as many of the "players" in this drama. I must say that our new projector worked like a charm. I want to thank Ron for doing such a fine job.

This month Brian Clague will present a program on the medical arts as they were practiced early in the war. He will focus on the Battle of Bull Run and show us what physicians knew and didn't know at the time. The fact that far more soldiers died from getting a "bug" rather than taking a "bullet" is well documented. The advent of the new Minnie ball as well as the rifled guns and cannons only added to the carnage on the battle field. The program should be thought provoking.

The annual Kearney Park Civil War Re-enactment will be coming up on the weekend of October 22 and 23. The Round Table will have a booth at this event and will be selling tickets and taking bids on many items the funds collected will be used for a contribution for preservation of a Civil War site. You can find more information on this effort in the report below.

Patty Spencer is in charge of the activities for the Round Table at the Re-enactment. She will need a lot of help so please give her a call and volunteer some of your time to this great cause.

On the same weekend as the Re-enactment, [October 21-22], the Huntington Library will have its annual

program called "Civil War Lives." The speakers list is impressive and includes Garry Gallagher, James McPherson, Joan Waugh, Stephen Cushman, and Ronald White. If you are interested in this program, you can contact Juan Gomez at the Huntington email researchconference@huntington.org or call him at 626 405-3432. The cost for this two day presentation is a staggering \$25.00.

If you haven't signed up for the Civil War Roundtable West Coast Conference that will take place on November 11-13 in Sacramento, you still have time to take advantage of this outstanding conference. I will be attending and hope that I see many of my friends from our Round Table in attendance. The topic for this year's conference is 1861, the first year of the War. It should be a great program.

Remember, our Round Table is looking at hosting the 2013 conference and will be covering the year 1863. We are working hard at getting this conference put together. More on that as we get more information.

The Round Table continues making plans for our December special guest, General Parker Hills. General Hills will be traveling from Mississippi to join us on December 8. This will be a special meeting in that we will not be having dinner on that evening and we, thanks to the wonderful work of General Ron Markarian and the Association of the United States Army, will be meeting at the Clovis Veterans' Memorial Hall instead of at Denny's.

General Hills' topic is "General Ulysses S. Grant: A Military Genius or Just Plain Lucky?" General Hills is the co-author [along with Ed Bearss] of the award winning work "Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg – The Campaigns that Changed the Civil War". He is also one of the founding members of the Friends of Raymond Battlefield.

General Hills will be introduced by Ranger Shelton Johnson from Yosemite National Park. Ranger Johnson is the author of "Gloryland" a novel about the life of a Buffalo Soldier from the Reconstruction South to guarding Yosemite Valley. He has also been seen on Ken Burns' documentary "The National Parks: America's Best Idea." As you will remember the Round Table contributed \$7,500.00 to the battlefield at Raymond Mississippi. General Hills has been a leader in the acquisition of the land that is related to that battle and for the purchase and placements of the artillery pieces in the exact location on that battlefield. He has also made sure that the cannons that are located on the field are of the exact caliber as the pieces that were there in 1863. This will be the only battlefield in the US with this feature.

The work to expand the acquisition of more hallowed ground and to continue with the mission to expand independently owned Raymond Battlefield Park continues. The Round Table Board has decided that we will try to make another sizeable contribution to the work of this outstanding park. We are hoping to raise an additional \$5,000.00 to contribute to the work at Raymond. Brian and Linda Clague have already pledged \$1000.00 toward this project and we have other club members who have indicated that they may make contributions. Thanks to the tireless work of Evan Jones we have a Rocco canvas painting of Mosby, two Reeves' prints, a hand crafted Civil War Action Figure as well as a contribution from Wiley Sword of a Civil War letter from a member of the 20th Texas. Ron Vaughn has donated a figurine of a civil war soldier and I will be contributing a Civil War action figure. We will be looking for other items and services to include in our goal of the contribution of \$5,000.00 to the Friends of Raymond Battlefield.

As you may be able to tell, I am very excited about this program because it again moves our Round Table to the front in the effort toward battlefield preservation and restoration. This is very near and dear to my heart.

You will get more information about our efforts as we get closer to the December meeting.

One of our members, Henry Howison, took a sentimental journey back home last month. This is the first time that Henry has been back east and it was quite a moving experience for him.

Henry's family moved out to California from Virginia and the family home is located on the battlefield at Fredericksburg. The house "Braehead" was built in the late 1850's by one of the Howison family. The family ran an extensive dairy operation and was one of the important families in the Fredericksburg area. At the time of the first Battle of Fredericksburg, the house sat on the confederate side of the line. The day of the battle General Lee and General Longstreet rode down from Telegraph Hill [now know as Lee's Hill] to Braehead for breakfast. Lee tied Traveler up to a small black walnut tree that was located close to the front door of the home. That tree is still there today but I don't think that any horse would be able to be tied to it.

Henry had the opportunity to visit the house and to have a tour of the home by the new owner of the property. It was quite a special experience for him. I'm glad that Henry had the opportunity to accomplish a lifelong dream



[Henry Howison with the owner of Braehead and the black walnut tree]

I hope to see you all at our next Round Table meeting that will be held on October 13 at Denny's in Clovis. Remember the meeting starts promptly at 7 and we hope to be out by 8:30 at the latest. Again if you want to have dinner please get to Denny's between 5:30 and 6:00 so that we can get started on time.

Have a great fall.

Yours:

Mike Green

AFTER ACTION REPORT

SJCWRT MEETING OF 9/8/11

By Ron Vaughan

As with last year, our first meeting of the Fall season had a small turnout, but it was good to see again the dozen members that were present. I gave a presentation on the Battle of Wilson's Creek. I encountered many computer difficulties with its preparation, such as the total erasing of my text, and trouble with the images. My thanks goes out to Mike Green for helping me, spending over 10 hours putting the 48 images into the power point!

My interest in the Civil War began as a youngster, watching "The Gray Ghost" TV show. Then there was a play on the "Omnibus" show about Pickett's Charge. My friends and I made wooden guns and acted out Gettysburg, so you might say that was my beginning in re-enacting. In High School I received a present from my aunt of "Battles and Leaders of The CW." I was particularly drawn to the sections on Wilson's Creek and Pea Ridge, thus began my interest in the Trans-Mississippi. Another factor contributing to my interest, is that my Great Grandfather William R. Vaughan served in the 4th & 10th Missouri State Militia Cavalry (Union).

Professor Richard McMurray says that most CW enthusiasts have "VD"-- Virginia Disease! This is his way of saying that many focus too much on the Eastern Theater, rather than the West. However, the Trans-Mississippi Theater, receives even less attention. There is a scarcity of books on Wilson's Creek. There are only five books (that I am aware of) on the battle:

1. The first was General Hans Christian Adamson's "Rebellion in Missouri," in 1961.
2. In 1975 Ed Bearss' "The Battle of Wilson's Creek." His book focused on the details of the battle, but not the context.
3. Next, in 1995, William Booksher published "Bloody Hill, The Second Battle of the Civil War." This is a good companion to Bearss', as only 40 pages are devoted to the battle, and the main body about the first year of the war in MO.
4. In 2000, Richard Hatcher and William Piston published "Wilson's Creek, the Second Battle of the Civil War." It is a most complete and scholarly work, using many primary sources not used before, namely soldiers letters, most of which are lost, but preserved in the soldier's hometown newspapers, which published many.
5. The most recent book is by Jeffery Patrick, "Campaign for Wilson's Creek," which I have ordered but not yet received.

The battle deserves more attention, as it was the second sizable battle, and was the bloodiest in terms of the percentage of casualties. The Rebels had a loss rate of 12 %, and Lyon's force had a casualty rate of 24.5 %. They were mostly as green and poorly trained as the troops at Bull Run, but they slugged it out at close range for hours. When the Union finally withdrew, they did so in good order, unlike the rout at Bull Run. The reasons for this

deserves further study. I will not retell the battle in this space, you can look it up on your own.

I will make a few observations on some of the main characters of the story.

MO Governor Claiborne Jackson and General Stirling Price schemed to take MO out of the Union, but Captain Nathaniel Lyon saved the State for the Union, but paid the ultimate price, and became the first Union General martyred. He may have been a psychopath and trampled the Constitution, but he acted while other Union generals begged for reinforcements, waited for orders, and made excuses for why they could not advance. He advanced 250 miles, nearly pushing the Southerners out of the state.

Franz Sigel's effectiveness is more difficult to evaluate. He contributed a great deal to the Union cause by rallying the German community to support the Union and enlist in the army. He was brave and willing to take risks, but perhaps it would have been better if he was not so daring. He expertly withdrew his outnumbered troops from Carthage, but should have had better tactical sense than marching his men into the situation in the first place. At Wilson's Creek, Sigel's stealthy march to surprise the Confederate camp in Sharps' field was a great achievement, routing and disorganizing significant part of the Rebel army. However, his follow up was a mishandled disaster.

EDITOR'S TIDBITS:

Due to difficulties in Email transmission of text from me to web-master Walt, some material went missing from the June and September issues of the Bugle Calls.

Therefore, I am re-sending articles, plus extra material for this issue.

Should anyone wish to submit articles or bits of information, please send them.

to me. Also, if anyone has a desire to take up the reins of editorship, please step forward and give it a try!

BATTLE OF ISLAND MOUND STATE PARK TO OPEN

Last year I gave a talk on the recruitment of African-Americans. The first Black regiment raised, despite lack of authorization by the Lincoln administration, was the 1st Kansas Colored Regt., organized by Brigadier General James Lane in August 1862.

On Oct. 27, 1862, a battalion of 250 of the 1st Kansas moved against guerrillas in Bates County, MO. They seized the home of Confederate guerrilla John Toothman, but were surrounded by a force of 350 guerrillas. The 1st Kansas fortified the farm and held off the Confederate horsemen for two days. On the third day, they sent out a reconnaissance party, which was attacked by the guerrillas. In the ensuing fight, the Rebels were repulsed with 40 casualties, while the 1st Kansas lost 8 killed and 11 wounded. This was the first engagement of Black soldiers.

In Oct. 2012, the State of MO will open a 40 acre park on the former home of Toothman, dedicated to the honor of the 1st Kansas Colored.

(Information from the Dec. 2011 issue of "The Civil War Times." and Wikipedia.)

750,000 DEATHS IN THE CIVIL WAR.

Professor J. David Hacker, of Binghamton U. has calculated the total deaths in the war are higher than the generally accepted estimate of 620,000.

The reasons for his estimate of 750,000 deaths is explained in the Sept. 22, 2011 issue of "Science Daily".

CIVIL WAR HUMOR

FROM "THE BLUE AND THE GRAY LAUGHING."

While at Berryville, Virginia, we established our lines, and all persons residing within them and wishing to go beyond them, were required to take the oath of allegiance. A contraband, wishing to go through, on learning the requirement, very innocently asked, "What is de oath?"

"You must swear to uphold the Constitution." replied the Marshall.

"Why," said Sam, "I can't hardly support the old woman, times is so dreadful hard!"

The marshal let him pass

150th ANNIVERSARY OF BIG BETHEL

. If you ask the question , "What was the first battle of the Civil War?" most people will answer "1st Bull Run/Manassas." They forget about the Battle of Big Bethel, VA (east of Richmond), fought on June 10th--- more than a month before Manassas.

. President Lincoln appointed Benjamin Butler as a Major General of Volunteers, because he was a Massachusetts Democrat that supported the Lincoln administration. He was given command of the Virginia dept., with HQ at Ft. Monroe. He would eventually have 7,500 men under his command, but he was forbidden by General Scott to take any offensive action.

Instead, he created policy for Lincoln, by refusing to return escaped slaves (as per The Fugitive Slave Law) to their Confederate owners. He declared that they were "contraband of war." This was the first step towards emancipation.

. Meanwhile, Col. John Magruder was in command of Southern troops on the Peninsula. He ordered Col. Daniel H. Hill to set up an outpost east of Yorktown, at Big Bethel. Hill's 1,400 troops built entrenchments along the Back River. He had his own 1st N. Carolina Regt, part of 3rd Virginia Regt., about 100 cadets from a military academy, and 6 guns of the Richmond Howitzers.

. Despite Scott's admonition, and without bothering to inform him, Butler ordered General Ebenezer Pierce to take 4,400 troops to attack the Big Bethel position, in a surprise night march. The troops marched on two roads: one column consisted of the 3rd and 5th New York Regts., and the second column, the 7th New York and parts of the 1st Vermont and 24th Mass., plus a battery of artillery. The 1st and 2nd N.Y. were to be the reserve.

. Night marches and attacks are always a difficult venture, and even more so with green troops. So as the two columns converged, they mistook each other for the enemy, and opened fire. By the time the mistake was realized, twenty-one soldiers were killed or wounded, and the Confederates fully alerted.

. Col. Abram Duryee, of the 5th N.Y. Zouaves, argued that since surprise was lost, it was "madness to continue." Nevertheless, Pierce decided to proceed with the attack. Flanking attempts were thwarted by the woods and marshes, mistakes involving of Union troops in gray uniforms, and green troops becoming scattered and disorganized. Finally as Major Theodore Winthrop bravely mounted a fence, waving his sword, and shouting "Come on boys; one more charge and the day is ours!", he was shot down. The assault died with him.

. Four dozen Yankees lay wounded and 18 were killed. The defenders only lost one killed and 10 wounded. Pierce lost his command, and Butler was greatly criticized, while Magruder and Hill were promoted to Generals.

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