

BUGLE CALL ECHOES



Vol. 6 No. 6, June 1998

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

JUNE MEETING

Robert Emmett Rodes, graduate of VMI, was a civil engineer when the Civil War broke out. He entered the Confederate Army as colonel of the 5th Alabama and fought in many of the major battles of the Civil War, including 1st Bull Run (Manassas), Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. His promotion to major general came as the result of his actions at the battle of Chancellorsville. Mike Carter will introduce us to General Rodes and detail his life at the June meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table.

Born and schooled in California, Mike graduated from the University of San Francisco with a BS degree in Organizational Behavior and Business Management. He has studied the Civil War since a child and finds that his greatest affinity is for the Southern military.

Mike learned of the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table at the reenactment at Kearney Park almost two years ago and has since become an integral part of the group. He has participated in the round table's discussion groups on the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, the Peninsula Campaign, and the Vicksburg Campaign; those who have heard his presentations at the study sessions will attest to Mike's wide knowledge of the Civil War.

Mike is serving on the round table's board this year as Vice President. Additionally, until a replacement is found, he is filling in as the board's secretary. For this last he would be most grateful to be relieved of duty.

JUNE MEETING POTLUCK

The June meeting will be a potluck dinner at the home of Barbara and Kenneth Moats, 4780 North Delno, Fresno.

The SJVCWRT will provide soft drinks and beer; BYOB if you prefer. Plates and eating utensils will be available. If your last name begins with a letter of the alphabet between A-L, please bring a casserole or salad. If your last name begins with a letter between M-Z, please bring a dessert.

Social hour will begin at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner and the program at 6:30 p.m.

RSVP by calling Ken Moats at 229-3654.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The fundraiser was a huge success! Thanks to all who supported it by contributing raffle items, by selling tickets, by mailing in a check, by giving amounts in excess of the dinner price, by bringing guests, by generous bidding on the auction items and by turning out. Jim Stanbery's angle on the strategic significance of the Vicksburg Campaign was provocative and somewhat unsettling. Unsettling in that you always have to dig below the surface of what you know, or think you know. And that's where the fascination comes in.

We hope everyone had a good time. It was great to have so many turn out!

If you want to know why the war isn't over yet in the South, read <u>Confederates in the Attic</u> by Tony Horwitz. He has a great sense of humor. This is a page-turner, especially if you've done any traveling in the South in recent years.

Our own Mike Carter will be the featured speaker at the June potluck. See Carol's notes for details.

Barbara Moats

by Bill Head

Jim Stanbery, professor of Political Science and History at LA Harbor College, both informed and entertained us at the May fund raiser. Forty-two people attended the function, which raised approximately \$1,800 (this amount includes a \$300 surplus from the Vicksburg tour held earlier in May).

The purpose of the fund raiser was to provide seed money to our round table as we prepare for the 14th Annual West Coast Civil War Conference to be held at the Tenaya Lodge November 6-8, 1998. Most of the money will go toward paying the air fares of our nationally known speakers.

People inquire as to why we sponsor the West Coast Conference. The answer is simple: to provide funds for the preservation of our American Civil War historical sites. Our historical heritage is rapidly disappearing across our nation as shopping centers, land developers, and the Disney Corporation continue to purchase the land for commercial development.

Our purpose is not to block responsible development but to insure that important historical sites are recognized and marked. Your support of the 14th Annual Civil War Conference is a step toward guaranteeing that your children and grandchildren will someday have the opportunity to experience the richness of their country's past.



McLean's House at Appomattox Court House

REMINDERS

- The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 16, 1998, at 6 p.m., 4780 N. Delno, Fresno. Note the new time and new date. All round table members are welcome to attend.
- * Have you renewed your membership? Dues are \$25 single; \$40 family; \$12.50 student; \$10 newsletter.

PRESERVATION

The following is from a recent mailing of Jerry Russell's:

WRITE, CALL, FAX OR E-MAIL Congressman George Miller (D-Calif.) (c/o US House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515) asking for the report from the February 24 Senate hearing on the Gettysburg situation. Tell Congressman Miller that you completely support his efforts to take the Park Service to task over the way they have "misled" (his word) Congress and the public about this proposed commercial project. Let Congressman Miller know that you CARE about preservation of battlefield land. Send copies of your message to your Congressman and to both your US Senators (Boxer and Feinstein, c/o US Senate, Washington, DC 20510). Tell Congressman Miller you are completely opposed to ANY commercial development within the boundaries of the battlefield. Ask him to urge the Park Service to seek public participation in fund raising efforts to build a (needed) visitor center/museum complex without commercial development.

Then write or call Supt. John Latschar, and ask him to explain WHY a bid was accepted which called for an invasion of sacred battlefield ground by commercial development, when two other bidders offered proposals which would NOT have involved commercial development inside the battlefield...Dr. Latschar has said they've gotten "very little opposition to this proposal" and claims that "only a handful of people, you can count them on your hand," are opposing it. "We don't need to worry about them," he said.

From *Grapeshot*, the newsletter of the Long Beach CWRT: Gettysburg Superintendent John Latschar will be speaking at their meeting this month. The meeting will be held at the Anaheim Fairfield Inn, 1460 S. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, at 7 p.m. on June 24.

icksburg Study Group

GRANT'S LANDING AT BRUINSBURG

by Mike Carter

After victories at Forts Henry and Donelson, Federal General Ulysses S. Grant set his sights confidently on the Confederate citadel at Vicksburg. The 1862 campaign for Vicksburg, however, did not go as well as Grant's previous successes. The Union supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi, was destroyed by Earl Van Dorn's cavalry and Sherman met with a bloody repulse at Chickasaw Bluffs, just north of Vicksburg.

Grant spent the remainder of 1862 and the early winter months of 1863 conducting a number of attempts to assault Vicksburg by water. These attempts have been collectively termed the "bayou experiments." While the experiments might have kept Grant's army busy and its morale up during the dark winter months, they were not successful and were consequently viewed by critical eyes in Washington as abject failures. Grant was paying the price for these failures in a hostile Northern press.

To further complicate matters, civilian morale in the North was reeling under the continuing misfortune of the Union armies in the field. The closest the Union had come to a victory was back in September of 1862 on the bloody fields of Sharpsburg, Maryland. Since that time, the Federals had suffered a catastrophic defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia, and sustained severe casualties at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, plus the aforementioned setback at Chickasaw Bluffs.

With the coming of spring 1863, Grant new he was facing a critical point in his military career. In order to restore confidence in the Northern public, Vicksburg must fall, and in its taking, Grant's career just might be saved.

Grant pondered the situation. His attempts to take Vicksburg from the north had failed miserably, and the futile attempts during the winter to find an attack route by water rendered that idea unworkable. The only option left was to run the guns of Vicksburg, down the Mississippi, and land his forces on the east bank of the river. Grant would then advance on the city fortress from the south. The plan was audacious at best, and if he was going to take the gamble, Grant was going to do it with enough manpower to guarantee his best chances

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for success. Therefore, Grant opted to make the planned movement with three corps under his direct command.

To Grant's relief, the effort to run the defenses of Vicksburg was successful, and he set his sights on Grand Gulf as the potential landing point. Grand Gulf, however, was strongly defended by the Confederates. Grant ordered the Union gunboats to open fire on the river bastion and they were answered in kind by the strong Southern shore batteries. After five hours of trading fire with the Confederates, the Union fleet disengaged.

The Federal commander had not expected a repulse at Grand Gulf and now Grant had to re-think his options. The decision was made to move still further south. Grant ordered John McClernand's XIII corps, which was to spearhead the Union attack, to debark across a point of land to DeShroon's plantation, about 4 miles down stream. The troops would then board transports and attempt the passage of Grand Gulf with the support of the Union gunboats and under the cover of darkness. Grant's plan worked perfectly and in the re-engagement of artillery fire from the Union flotilla and the Confederate batteries, the Federals lost but one man.

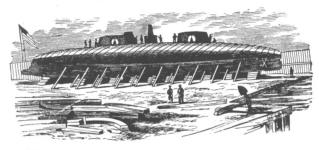
Now south of the Grand Gulf fortress, Grant must look for yet another place to land his army. In selecting a landing site, the most important consideration would be the presence of adequate dry land. With the area laced by bayous and side streams, finding the desired location was not an easy task.

Rodney was selected as the most practical site, but Rodney was another twelve miles down stream, further south. By moving to Rodney, the march back to Vicksburg would only be lengthened and would afford the Confederates additional time to improve their defenses and would increase the possibility of Rebel reinforcements arriving.

Grant faced the necessity of changing his strategy yet again, but recognized that local knowledge was needed to assist him in this confused mire of bayous and swamps. He ordered a detachment east across the river and they soon returned with a slave from the area. The slave had not been a willing cooperator. In fact, he had to be taken by force, but once in the presence of Grant, he offered the small village of Bruinsburg as a place with dry ground enough to accommodate a landing.

Bruinsburg was six miles below DeShroon's, but was only half the distance to Rodney. There was adequate dry land and there was a good road leading to Grand Gulf by way of Port Gibson, which lay ten miles inland. Bruinsburg it would be!

By midmorning, April 30, 1863, all four divisions of John McClernand's XIII corps and one division of James McPherson's corps were ashore at Bruinsburg. The landing had been unopposed and the Union forces were advancing toward Port Gibson.



TO APPOMATTOX COURTHOUSE

by Ethelene Dyer Jones

A deep heat haze hung over the landscape early the morning of June 16 as we got on the road again at Lexington, Virginia heading south. For two days we had traveled through parts of the Alleghenies, preferring to take the scenic route south from Niagara through New York and Pennsylvania into a corner of West Virginia and Virginia. If something appealed to our fancy, we took time to stop and see it. We were delighted with the beautiful farmland and the countryside, appreciating anew the variety of scenery available in our own United States.

Bath, New York, where we spent a night, was a quaint, historical town, with a delightful restaurant called "The Loafing Tree." From Lexington in Virginia we drove to Natural Bridge to see and enjoy the nighttime "Drama of Creation," a combination of narration and lights in creative display against the backdrop of another natural wonder of the world.

We accessed the Skyline Drive (Blue Ridge Parkway). Soon we saw playful whitetail deer eating their breakfast of grass along the road's shoulders. We were saddened by tangled evidence of tornado damage in stretches of forest.

Using our "Golden Eagle" National Park pass, we got into Appomattox National Historical Park in short order. The lady ranger at the gate urged, "We have a heat wave

warning today. Try to stay in the buildings as much a possible, and don't overexpose yourself." We had already heard that the expected temperature was well above 100 degrees, with the heavy humidity pushing the heat factor in excess of 115 degrees. We heeded the warning, spending less time than we had hoped at the complex, a living history museum commemorating the ending of the Civil War. But our short visit gave a taste of a significant event in history.

In the parlor of the Wilmer McLean house at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee of the Confederacy surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant of the U. S. forces. A major term of the surrender was that Confederates pledge not to take up arms again against the United States. Officers were allowed to keep their side arms, and any soldier owning and using his own horse in war could take it home with him. Three days later on April 12, 1865, at what has been named "Surrender Triangle" (east of the courthouse and within sight of the Kelly and Peers? family homes), 28,231 Confederate soldiers laid down their weapons and furled their battle flags. This surrender of arms occurred on the fourth anniversary of the firing on Ft. Sumter, which had marked the beginning of the war.

Because of poor communication, the war did not end immediately. As word progressed, General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to William T. Sherman in North Carolina on April 26, 1865. General Edmund Kirby Smith lowered the Confederate flag in Galveston, Texas on June 2, 1865.

The war, claiming more American lives than any other in our history, was over. Deep scars lingered on. It was ironic that the Wilmer McLean family had left Manassas County, Virginia, in 1863 to get away from fighting and to move to the more remote Appomattox Court House (formerly called Clover Hill). Little did they dream the important role they would play in history by providing the place for the official surrender to occur.

Oppressive heat likely was not a part of the April 1865 events that saw the loss of one Northern and eighteen Southern soldiers in a skirmish near Appomattox Court House. As this June 16, 1994, day grew hotter and the heat haze more threatening, we drove by the small Confederate cemetery where all nineteen casualties were buried. I thought how the cemetery might have been much larger had the surrender not come when it did.

Ethelene Dyer Jones is a columnist for the News Observer of Blue Ridge, Georgia. Her article was reprinted with permission.

THE SJVCWRT VICKSBURG TOUR

by Carol Berry

<u>Saturday morning</u>, <u>May 16</u>, finds us at the Fresno airport for an 8:30 departure. The tour group totals nineteen, most of whom will be on the flight: The Perrys, Pat and Frank from Twain Harte, are there, as are Gail and Jerry

Monson from Fresno. San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table members on the tour include Tim Johnson, our Intrepid Facilitator; Bill and Bette Head (Bill's job being that of looking after the Intrepid Facilitator): Kenneth and Barbara Moats; Linda. Brian and Courtney Clague: Chuck and Mary Baley; and me. connecting flight is in Dallas, where Bill Gretchen and Callahan, who live in Sunnyvale, join us. When we arrive in Memphis, David and Buena Taylor of San Diego complete the roster. They have flown in from New Orleans.

Our bus, which is driven by Louie Crawford, is at the airport when we land. The bus accommodates 47 passengers and has a lounge area and restroom facilities in the back. Tim has stocked two

large coolers with soft drinks and bottled water for us for use during the entire trip. The vehicle is equipped with video and audio equipment, and we hear a Bobby Horton tape as we wend our way via Highway 72 to Corinth, Mississippi. The trip takes about an hour and a half.

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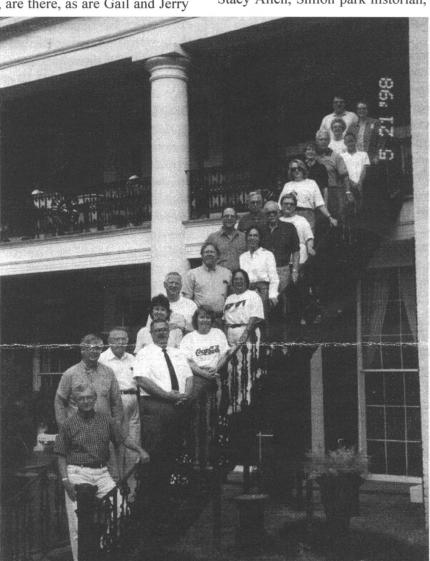
We stay at the Executive Inn in Corinth. Checking into our rooms, we find two Civil War books on the beds for our reading pleasure. The books, about Shiloh and Corinth and their corresponding battles, are authored by the owner of the Executive Inn, Stockton Truitt. For dinner, we gather at Truitt's, the motel's restaurant. Stacy Allen, Shiloh park historian, and his wife join us.

Stacy speaks to the group, setting up the battle of Shiloh. He's very enthusiastic about his subject and is an interesting speaker.

Sunday, May 17. For breakfast, most of us walk across the road from the motel to House the of Omelettes. Soon after, we are on the bus and on our way. to Shiloh. We spend the entire day touring the battlefield with Stacy Allen. starts us out at Pittsburg Landing and develops the battle from there. At the Old Corinth Road, Stacy tells us how the **Federals** were facing south and

the Confederates east when the first stirrings of battle occurred. Next stop is Fraley's Field, where Stacy

describes how U. S. Grant, having breakfast at the Cherry Mansion in Savannah, Tennessee, hears the battle, boards a steamer and reaches Pittsburg Landing around 9 a.m. We spend time at Spain's and Bell's fields, Shiloh Church, at Albert Sidney Johnston's death site, at Bloody Pond, and near the Hornet's Nest. Stacy tells us that his great-great grandfather, Solomon



AT CEDAR GROVE MANSION, VICKSBURG

From bottom to top: Tim Johnson, Bill Callahan, Warren Grabau, Louie Crawford, Gretchen Callahan, Bette Head, Bill Head, Buena Taylor, Dave Taylor, Linda Clague, Brian Clague, Ken Moats, Mary Baley, Chuck Baley, Carol Berry, Gail Monson, Jerry Monson, Courtney Clague, Barbara Moats, Pat Perry, Frank Perry. Photo courtesy of the Taylors.

Osborne, who served with Company B of the 40th Illinois Infantry, fought at Vicksburg.

Marjel's, a very colorful restaurant in Corinth, complete with a decorated and lit Christmas tree, is where we have dinner. Marjel opens the place just for us and visits with each table during dinner. I sit with the Clagues. My meal is shrimp gumbo, and for dessert, the four of us share a piece of chocolate pecan pie.

Monday, May 18. Breakfast at the omelet place before starting out on a tour with Stacy Allen to see Civil War sites in Corinth and Brice's Crossroads. Stacy hikes us out into a wooded area near Corinth to view an extant trenchline, which he describes as one of the first examples of an offensive entrenchment. We stop at Battery F and Battery Robinette and near the rail station, where a pitched battle occurred during the fight for the town. We meet Stacy at Brice's Crossroads and learn the details of that action involving Forrest and Grierson. Before saying goodbye, Stacy points out a monument that has been stained with olive oil. The defacement is the work of three men who have been traveling to Civil War battlefields, blowing a ram's horn, and "anointing" monuments with the oil in an effort to "bring the country together."

The trip to Vicksburg takes about 4 hours via the Natchez Trace, putting us in Vicksburg around 7:10 p.m. My room at the Cedar Grove Mansion is on the 3rd floor and the nameplate on the door identifies the suite as Scarlett's Penthouse; Rhett's room is next door. A four poster bed is part of the decor in my room. All the suites in the mansion are named for Civil Warconnected personages, including Grant, Sherman, Pemberton, Jefferson Davis, and Bonnie Blue. Dinner that night is at the mansion's restaurant, Andre's. I sit with Warren and Jean Grabau, a delightful couple. Warren, retired from the Army Corps of Engineers, will be our guide on the Vicksburg Campaign. When Jean hears me comment on the excellent salad dressing, she asks the waitress if it is possible to obtain the recipe. The waitress tells us to ask at the front desk. Here is the recipe for Chef Andre's Creole Salad Dressing:

4 gallons Zatarains Mustard Creole 1 gallon olive oil 1 gallon apple cider vinegar 4 boxes brown sugar 4 jars honey 12 bunches of green onion (chop up and stir) <u>Tuesday, May 19</u>. On the road with Warren Grabau. H starts the tour in Louisiana where Grant brought his troops south. We stop at Grand Gulf on the way to Port Gibson. Warren tells the story of the siege gun which is on display at Grand Gulf Military Park:

There was a fleet of 12 mortar schooners at Vicksburg all through the siege throwing 13 inch shells into the city. After the siege was over and the river was open, those ships were moved from Vicksburg and taken to the east coast for the attack on Fort Fisher. The records very clearly state that all 12 of them left Vicksburg but only 11 of them arrived on the east coast. We never thought very much about it. We just figured they lost it at sea or something. Things like that do happen and sometimes escape the record books, so we didn't think anything about it. One day down here, I was working on the beginnings of this park, talking to the local people, and one old guy said he'd been over on Davis Island, which is across the river, and there was an old gun over there. I said, What kind of an old gun? He said, I don't know, just an old gun. And I said, Civil War gun? I don't know, just a big old gun. Where was it? Well, he told me where it was. He said, You go to the eastern end of the island, which is where it was cut off by the river, and there is a little private levee along there, about three feet high, and you go over that levee on the other side and off there in the woods is this gun. I thought, what the hell, it's worth it.

Several months later I got a chance to get over there and I climbed up on that little levee and I looked out over it and it is thigh-deep in poison ivy and honeysuckle and cat's claw and stuff like that and the soil is two feet below the leafy mat on the surface. I looked at that and said, I'm not even going to try, this is an absolute lost cause. I don't know what's out there, it doesn't matter, I'm quitting. And I turned away, and all of a sudden, right at my feet, at the bottom of this levee on the river side was this great big circle with another circle inside it. I was looking directly at the face of that mortar. That is the 12th of the Vicksburg mortars.

We get back to Cedar Grove around 5 p.m. Before dinner, there is a tour of the mansion. We learn that Mrs. Klein, whose husband owned the mansion at the time of the Civil War, was related to William Tecumseh Sherman. A son born to the Kleins in 1863 was named William Sherman Klein.

Wednesday, May 20. On the road again with Warren, this time to study the battles of Raymond, Champion

I and the Big Black. On the way back to Vicksburg, we detour slightly to drive by the bluffs at Vicksburg and see Chickasaw Bayou from a distance. After dinner, Terry Winschel, National Park historian at Vicksburg, performs a living history presentation of a Confederate soldier. His performance, drawn from the letters, diaries and accounts of people who lived through the siege of Vicksburg, is very moving.

Thursday, May 21. Warren takes us to Vicksburg National Military Park to learn about some of the battles fought in and around the town. Lunch at Duff's Tavern, then a visit to the USS Cairo (which Warren was instrumental in finding in the 1960s). I hear Warren tell a woman behind the counter at the Cairo museum's bookstore he is amazed that a group of Californians are interested in coming to Mississippi to study the Civil War. Leaving the park, we tour the Duff Green Mansion (a hospital during the Civil War) and finish the day's outing at the Old Courthouse Museum. The group purchases a book on Civil War art, everyone signs it, and we give it to Tim Johnson at dinner to say thanks for a job well done. After dinner, a group of us sit outside. It is delightful to see fireflies flitting about the lawn--a reminder of my growing up days in Indiana. Before retreating indoors because of bombarding mosquitoes, I fleetingly wonder how the soldiers garrisoned here stood it without Off at their disposal.

Friday, May 22. Last day! Breakfast at the mansion, time for check out, then on the bus to Memphis. Heard Cedar Grove's manager (what was I doing the entire trip? Lurking?!) tell Tim Johnson that we are the best group they have had stay with them, that we made the staff's jobs easy.

We stop around 11 a.m. for lunch in Grenada, Mississippi. Arriving in Memphis early, Louie takes us on a quick tour of the city: Graceland, Nathan Bedford Forrest's statue, close to Shelby Foote's home, Beale Street, the riverfront, the zoo. Arrive at the airport at 3:30 p.m. where we say our good-byes to the Callahans, Monsons, Perrys and Taylors, who have more places to visit before returning to California.

Our plane is late leaving Memphis, requiring us to move at the doublequick to catch our flight in Dallas for Fresno. Well, some of us move at the double quick. The rest of us ride a motorized cart. Most surprising of all is that our luggage arrives in Fresno when we do. I am in Merced by 10 p.m., tired but exhilarated by such a great week.

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SJVCWRT OFFICERS FOR 1998

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



Palmetto Flag, South Carolina

THE CIVIL WAR IN TENNESSEE

A conference sponsored by HeritagePac and Civil War Round Table Associates on the Civil War in Tennessee is scheduled for October 1-4, 1998, in Nashville, Tennessee.

At present, the schedule of speakers is comprised of:

- Ed Bearss
- *Thomas Cartwright*, Curator of the Carter House in Franklin, Tennessee
- Dr. Grady McWhiney
- Dr. Robert Meinhard, Winona State University
- Don Nall, Batesville CWRT
- James Ogden, Historian at Chickamauga and Chattanooga NMP
- Jerry Russell

Conference topics include Patrick Cleburne, The Battle of Murfreesboro and Tennessee's Last Campaigns, plus tours of Stones River and Columbia/Spring Hill/Franklin, led by Ed Bearss. There is an optional tour of the Tullahoma Campaign on the final day of the conference.

Cost of the event, if registering is completed before 9/1/98: \$310 for members of the CHI/CWRTA, \$330 for non-members. After 9/1/98, registration fees are \$330 and \$350. The optional tour is \$75, or \$85 if paid after 9/1/98.

Contact Jerry Russell at 501-225-3996 for more information.

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.

Date	Speaker	Topic/Event
June 25, 1998	Mike Carter	Robert E. Rodes
July 30, 1998	Brian Clague, M. D.	Civil War Medicine at Vicksburg
August 27, 1998	Bill Head	Grierson's Raid
September, 1998	Jeffrey Hummel	Why the North Should Have Seceded from the
(day to be announced)		South
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	The state of the s	Christmas Get Together

SJVCWRT PO Box 5695 Fresno, CA 93755







Gen. Ulysses S. Grant

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