

# BUGLE CALL ECHOES



Vol. 6 No. 5, May 1998

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

## MAY MEETING SPEAKER

For the Confederacy, if not for the Union, the strategic significance of Vicksburg involved not control of the Mississippi River but entry to the Southern heartland. The essential Confederate objective in the Vicksburg campaign was not to keep the river closed to north-south Union traffic down it or open to east-west rebel traffic across it. The objective was to secure the side door to the most productive zone, agriculturally and industrially, in the Confederacy. Jim Stanbery, our speaker at the May round table meeting, believes that objective was achieved. He will discuss it in his talk entitled, *Game of Doors: What the Confederacy Won at Vicksburg*.

Jim, a native Californian, received his BA at UC Berkeley and his MA at CSU Long Beach; at present, he is Professor of Political Science at LA Harbor College. From 1967 to 1969, he served with the Peace Corps in the Philippines. He is past associate editor of *Civil War Regiments*, author of *California 2000 Campaign* and a member of both the Long Beach and San Gabriel Valley Civil War round tables.

Jim has made presentations at several West Coast Civil War conferences, and his talks are always well received. He is a stimulating, interesting and thought-provoking speaker. A not-to-be-missed evening!

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We have been fortunate in our programs this year. The combination of good speakers, good turnouts and the Ramada setting have produced first-rate meetings. May is special because it will be a fund raiser event. The goal is to raise \$500 for our treasury to enable us to move forward with plans to hold the 1998 West Coast Civil War Conference at Tenaya Lodge, at the gateway to Yosemite National Park. I promise you our speaker, Jim Stanbery, is one you will not want to miss. Come out and support your Round Table as you have in the past.

A preservation form letter is attached for your convenience. Please take a few minutes to sign it and mail it out. Your voice added to many other voices will demonstrate a strong grassroots concern for the preservation of our treasured national battlefields. Do it now. Thanks.

*Barbara Moats*

## MAY FUND RAISER

The May meeting of the San Joaquin Valley CWRT, our fund raiser event, is scheduled for May 28, 1998, at the Ramada Inn on Shaw at Highway 41 in Fresno. A no-host social hour begins at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and the program at 7 p.m.

Because this is our fund raiser evening, the cost of the meal will be \$25 (\$15 for students under 25).

Send your check to Wayne Bowen in care of the SJVCWRT, Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755, or call him at 291-4885 to make your reservation.

**Reservations are important.**

*Vicksburg Study Group*

## THE BAYOU PROJECTS AND PORTER'S BOMBARDMENT OF GRAND GULF

*by Ken Moats*

### December 3, 1862

General Grant asked General Halleck for permission to move south from Memphis, Tennessee, to Helena, Arkansas, in order to get south of the Yazoo River and secure Vicksburg, Mississippi.

### December 5, 1862

Halleck ordered Grant to send 25,000 troops down the Mississippi River for the Vicksburg expedition. Grant sent Sherman in order to get him in command. General McClelland was to arrive soon and he outranked Sherman. Meanwhile he (Grant) was advancing south along the Mississippi Central Railroad toward Grenada after having established a base of supplies at Holly

Springs. When McClernand did arrive, he was not a little surprised to find his troops had already departed with Sherman.

### December 18, 1862

While near Oxford, Mississippi, Grant received orders to reform his forces into four army corps with McClernand in charge of the corps moving down the Mississippi River. This meant that McClernand would be the senior commander of the operation.

### December 20, 1862

After the Confederate capture of the supply base at Holly Springs, Grant decided to abandon the overland campaign and place the bulk of his force down the Mississippi. (Intelligence indicated that General Pemberton was falling back toward Vicksburg.) After the fall of Holly Springs, Grant sent out foraging parties and was pleasantly surprised at the amount of food and forage available.

### December 27, 1862

Sherman moved up the Yazoo River to Chickasaw Bluffs, northeast of Vicksburg. Much of the area was flooded and the bluffs were well defended by Pemberton's men. With communications cut, Grant was unable to stop the attack at Chickasaw Bluffs and Sherman was soundly repulsed.

### January 17, 1863

Grant visited McClernand at Napoleon, Louisiana. Everywhere he went he found evidence of McClernand's lack of fitness for command. So Grant assumed command of the expedition on 29 January.

### January 20, 1863

McClernand's corps was ordered south to Young's Point just below Milliken's Bend on the Mississippi, where he established his headquarters.

### 1862-1863, Wintering Over

The winter was noted for much rain and high water. Levies provided the only dry ground for the troops. This high water would restrict movement until March or April.

### January 30, 1863

Grant ordered General McPherson at Lake Providence to cut the levy at that point. If successful in opening a channel for navigation by this route, it would carry the troops to the mouth of the Red River, south of Vicksburg. The route taken would be Bayou Baxter to Bayou Macon to the Tensas River, then to the Washita, and then the Red River--altogether about 472 miles of bayous and

small rivers. Colonel Wilson of Grant's staff was sent north to open a route through Moon Lake to the Yazoo Pass.

### February 2, 1863

The levy at Moon Lake was cut. This route took them down the Coldwater River to the Tallahatchie, the Yalobusha, the Yazoo and on down to the bluffs northeast of Vicksburg. The expedition got as far as Greenwood, where Ft. Pemberton was located on the Yazoo.

### April 1863

Flood waters started to recede. River roads started to emerge above the water. Grant moved troops towards Hard Times, Louisiana.

### April 14, 1863

Admiral Porter attempted the Steel's Bayou route. Steel's Bayou connects with Black Bayou, which connects with Deer Creek, Deer Creek with Rolling Fork, Rolling Fork with the Big Sunflower River, and the Big Sunflower with the Yazoo. Porter explored this route to Deer Creek. The next day, accompanied by Sherman, he started with five gunboats and four mortarboats. He got well ahead of his infantry protection and encountered rebel sharpshooters. Sherman paddled back by canoe to bring troops forward to relieve the stranded, embattled admiral.

Grant held little hope for these bayou and river attempts; however, he was ready to capitalize on any one that might get through. He was happy to keep the troops busy.

### April 27, 1863

McClernand's entire corps was at Hard Times. Grant made plans to cross the Mississippi at Grand Gulf on 29 April.

### April 29, 1863

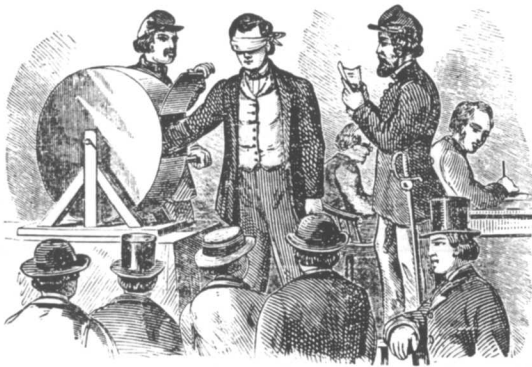
At 8:00 PM Admiral Porter attacked the batteries at Grand Gulf with little effect. The Confederate artillery was well positioned with excellent fortifications. After five hours of bombardment, the attack was called off. Grant requested that Porter run the batteries with the transports that night so that he would be south of Grand Gulf. That night (29-30 April) Porter slipped his fleet, plus transports, downriver past the guns at Grand Gulf. The transports anchored south of Grand Gulf about five miles from Hard Times. McClernand's corps moved overland from Hard Times to the embarkation point. A Negro from the Mississippi state side was taken for information. He informed Grant that Bruinsburg was a

## BUGLE CALL ECHOES

... good landing site. When the sun came up, the rebels could see many transports laden with boys in blue heading downstream. The crossing so long worked for was in progress!

### April 30, 1863

McClelland's troops were put ashore, unopposed, at Bruinsburg. In one of Grant's famous pronouncements, he said, "I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equaled since. ... I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labors, hardships and exposures that had been made and endured were for the accomplishment of this one object."



The Draft

### **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>	Ken Moats, Tim Johnson

### **THE DAY THE ARMY CAME**

by Ed Wonilowicz

The white haze and heat of high summer held the crossroads on the day the army came. From the steps of the clapboard church, in front of the livery, on porches, and along the fence rails lining the road, neighbors craned necks and spoke in an excited hush. A string of riders had stopped only long enough to give the news, to drink and to water lathered horses at the roadside creek before pressing on with the information. Too many horsemen had come for this to be another rumor, and confirmation came with the rising cloud of dust darkening the smudge of horizon to the east. Then, out of the cloud came a

clattering, steaming line of men--a dark, metallic serpent stretching beyond view. Next came wagons, horses, men, guns, and still more of these until the eyes of the people glazed from the sight. There were flags, shouts of encouragement, dippers of water, fruits of the fields, and small tokens given to the soldiers--these bedraggled deliverers struggling through the searing heat.

The soldiers were hard pressed and could not stop to rest, but the adulation of the townspeople buoyed them and gave strength to weary bones and hearts. Only brief pauses were taken to quickly accept the gifts and the sustenance of the grateful patriots. For hours the army passed, then was gone. Only memory and the layer of dust coating the buildings stayed as evidence of their passing. In the evening came thunder and rain to cool the crossroads, and even the dust was gone.

In the following days, a different kind of thunder came out of clear skies as a distant battle raged. The people wondered how many the battle claimed of those who had passed. Had their gifts given small comfort to final hours? Had brief encouragement steeled the men to their terrible work? Soon news of the great victory came, and then too returned the army. As they shuffled back through the crossroads, there was no jubilation, but a weariness and a heavy sadness. Now came the wounded, and the church filled with their suffering, and even the steps of the church, and even the fields beyond. Now there was need for rest.

The army's fires claimed the fence rails as men camped along the creek. Curtains, bedspreads, petticoats went for bandages and blankets. All that could be given and more went to succor the heroes. For three days, voices, cries, and songs filled the air. The sights, smells, and sounds of the thousands overwhelmed the little place, giving it new meaning and giving new purpose to the people. The blood of soldiers soaked the ground, and in the fertile earth, some were left behind when finally the army passed away forever.

The days and years that followed brought a need to remember and a need to heal. Letters and diaries told of the passing of the army, individual encounters, painful, joyful, horrible moments. Veterans came to visit the graves of fallen comrades. Some came to retrieve bodies of loved ones, to carry them home to rest. Soon the war became a dim recollection of old, old men recounted to children too young to understand and adults too preoccupied to listen. When the old men and their memories were gone, something died with them.

The writings were put away in attics and bottom drawers. The stories went untold. The church where the soldier suffered and the surgeon plied his knife gave way to the Pizza Hut and the left turn lane. The smoking snarl of traffic drowned the whisper of the passing multitude from long ago. Even as ghosts bent to fill canteens at the creek, the waters were trussed in concrete culverts and soiled by refuse of people too busy and self-assured to reflect on the past. Where the graves of fallen heroes lay, a sign hawked "Luxury Townhomes from the 110s." The crossroads had changed and is changing still.

A lonely man shuffles to the crossroads through noisy smog of a rush hour day. He is one who feels he must pay tribute, that the story should be told. He cannot remember as the old men did, but in the dusty writings he seeks to find a thread to connect him to a time more distant than years. As he pauses to take in the surrounding clamor, he is nudged and jostled by the present. There are stares and scowls, and worse, blank countenances of the go-getters rushing to meetings and power lunches. He knows what happened here, but struggles to believe it, so incongruous is the scene. Where men in final delirium of pain and death called for loved ones and grasped for the warm caring hand of a stranger, he watches them use plastic to pay at the pump, then roll on consumed by the here and now.

The man feels the thirst brought on by his modern trek under hot summer sun. He thinks of the soldiers and the creek, but even his nostalgic trance cannot induce him to drink from its fetid waters. But thanks to progress, there stands a 7-11 on the old campground. Reluctantly, he surrenders. To the cashier he says, "Did you know an army camped right here during the Civil War?" A blank stare, a nervous smile, he might be dangerous. "Oh really. One oh four, please." Money changes hands. "Thank you, have a nice day."

Outside on the corner, he finds the only vestige. Two sentences on a weathered metal plaque, half obscured by the telephone pole. Two sentences. A dismissal accompanied by the smell of hot creosote. Lives were changed, lives were lost, lives are forgotten and over there a backhoe belches noise and smoke, excavating for new fiberoptics. The man feels tears and turns away wondering if we will ever learn. And the army marches off into the dust.

*Reprinted from the Pipe Creek Circular, newsletter of the Pipe Creek CWRT of Carroll County, MD. Used with permission.*

## REMINDERS

- ➔ The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 9, 1998, at 6 p.m., 4780 N. Delno, Fresno. Note the new time.
- ➔ Have you renewed your membership? Dues are \$25 single; \$40 family; \$12.50 student; \$10 newsletter.
- ➔ If you are interested in filling the secretarial position on the SJVCWRT board, which is temporarily being held by Mike Carter, please contact Barbara Moats at 229-3654.
- ➔ Besides the two-night stay at Tenaya Lodge giveaway, there will also be a door prize awarded, our regular raffle with numerous items for the winners to choose from, and a silent auction at the fund raiser on May 28, 1998. The silent auction will include a water color print done by Bill Head. Send your reservations for the dinner, ticket stubs and check(s) to the SJVCWRT, PO Box 5695, Fresno, CA 93755.

## GETTYSBURG PROPOSAL

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a letter addressed to Senator Thomas, Chairman of the Senate National Parks Subcommittee, regarding the proposed Visitor Center and museum complex at Gettysburg. Use the letter as a template for your own, or sign your name to this one and send it.

*Also consider writing or sending cc's to:*

Senators Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, and Dale Bumpers (D-AR), ranking Democrat on the Senate National Parks Subcommittee, c/o the US Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Send mail for US Representatives Calvin Dooley (D) and George P. Radanovich (R) c/o House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Ask them to express their opposition on the Kinsley proposal to both the Senate and House subcommittees on National Parks. Also write to Superintendent John Latschar, c/o Gettysburg National Military Park, 97 Taneytown Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325.

It is important to keep up the pressure. The number of letters is what counts!



May 29, 1998

The Honorable Craig Thomas, Chairman  
Senate National Parks Subcommittee  
US Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Thomas:

Civil War enthusiasts, myself among them, are strongly opposed to the proposed Kinsley-Park Service consortium at Gettysburg National Military Park. This \$45,000,000 visitor center and museum complex will put commercial development inside the boundaries of Gettysburg battlefield, expanding the 40-year growth of commercial development that stands within a few hundred feet of the current visitor center.

This would seriously compromise the historic integrity of the battlefield and divert attention from it. I am completely opposed to this plan. The battlefield, after all, is the whole point of Gettysburg. Historic land should be purchased first, before it is gone forever. Preserving the artifacts is important, but the land is even more precious.

Facilities needn't be high tech monuments to modern culture. They should serve the needs and pocketbooks of the many students and average citizens who go there to learn and forge a connection with their heritage. They should serve as a "jump off" point to visiting the park, not as an experience in itself.

We care.

Respectfully yours,

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

## CALIFORNIA'S MILITARY MUSEUM

by David Bean

The Sacramento Bee featured an article about the California Military Museum and a special exhibit commemorating California's role during the Civil War. Californians have never gained much recognition for their contribution to that war effort. The men from this state who fought to preserve the Union have almost entirely been "unsung heroes."

Though they considered themselves Californians, nearly all had come to the Golden State from east of the Mississippi. When war broke out between the states, many of these settlers and frontier men created regiments --many destined to return to fight in the East. As a result, few of the Union Army troops from California were ever properly recognized or honored.

As one of the newest states in the Union, California was represented in quasi-official status among the Eastern volunteer regiments. A Californian, Col. Roderic Matheson, first recruited a regiment composed of men from the West Coast. At the time this 1st California regiment was formed, it was not credited to any state, but was treated just as a regular army organization. Matheson's 1st California Regiment took part in nine major battles and campaigns, including the battle at Gettysburg. Although he called his unit the 1st California, its heroic struggles were noted in battle records as the accomplishments of the 32nd Regiment of New York Volunteers.

As another example, members of the California 100 Regiment were recruited and formed in California prior to moving east and became part of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry. This group fought 51 battles, from Gettysburg to Appomattox.

The first Californian to be awarded the nation's highest military honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, was Capt. Henry H. Crocker for heroic action at Cedar Creek, VA. Crocker was a member of the California 100 Regiment. Today, the California 100 Regiment's war torn flag is hanging on display in the California State Capitol.

Another Californian that personified the state's spirit during the Civil War was Edward D. Baker, a good friend of President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln commissioned Baker as a colonel of US volunteers. He formed a regiment and built his unit into a full brigade,

## **BUGLE CALL ECHOES**

credited and funded by the State of California. The unit became known as "Baker's California Brigade" and, ironically, it was also called the 1st California Brigade. This brigade was also known as the 71st Pennsylvania Volunteers. By war's end, Baker's brigade had participated in 17 major battles and campaigns but received little credit in its home state.

At the end of the war, the 1st California Brigade, with the exception of a few officers and three companies, was largely soldiered with Pennsylvanians. With the untimely death of the California leader, Pennsylvania claimed the unit as one of its own and thereafter it was known only as the Pennsylvania Brigade. A monument dedicated to these native sons stands prominently on the Gettysburg battlefield and is inscribed on one side, "71st Pennsylvania Volunteers," and on the other, simply, "California."

Per-capita, California provided more troops than any other state in the Union. The record of these Civil War units, especially their association with California, has not been widely recognized. Now present-day Californians can "rediscover" their courageous predecessors' performances at the exhibit at the California Military Museum in Sacramento. The Museum is located at 1119 2nd Street in Old Sacramento.

*Reprinted from Grapeshot, newsletter of the CWRT of Long Beach. Used with permission.*

For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are loaded and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out and Pickett himself with his long oiled ringlets and his hat in one hand probably and his sword in the other looking up the hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet, it not only hasn't begun yet but there is still time for it not to begin against that position and those circumstances...yet it's going to begin, we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and that moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *This time. Maybe this time* with all this much to lose and all this much to gain: Pennsylvania, Maryland, the world, the golden dome of Washington itself to crown with desperate and unbelievable victory the desperate gamble, the cast made two years ago; or to anyone who ever sailed even a skiff under a quilt sail, the moment in 1492 when somebody thought *This is it*: the absolute edge of no return, to turn back now and make home or sail irrevocably on and either find land or plunge over the world's roaring rim.

**William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust***

**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>
May 28, 1998	Jim Stanbery	West Coast Conference Fund Raiser
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	Vicksburg
September, 1998 (day to be announced)	Jeffrey Hummel	Why the North Should Have Seceded from the 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		Christmas Get Together



1st NY  
Berry's Brigade

SJVCWRT  
PO Box 5695  
Fresno, CA 93755

04:38 05/16/98 P&DC FRIEND CA



Lee and His Horse Traveler  
Leaving Appomattox

93722/3200



## SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

### CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

May 5, 1998

Dear Friends,

On Thursday, May 28, 1998 the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table **FUND RAISER** will be held at the Ramada Inn (Shaw Avenue and Freeway 41). The no-host cocktail hour begins at 6:00 p.m. with dinner served at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are only \$25 per person. What a bargain!

Our speaker is the dynamic James Stanbery who will speak on THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN using his unique approach to Civil War history with slides, sounds and exciting narrative. Everyone who knows Mr. Stanbery or has heard him speak is well aware of his dramatic talents and riveting storytelling skills. This is one presentation that you will not want to miss!

The goal for this event is to raise \$500 for our treasury. These funds are sorely needed if we are to move forward with plans to hold the 1998 West Coast Civil War Round Table Conference at the Tenaya Lodge, Yosemite National Park.

We urge you to attend this very special event:

**A Multimedia Approach to the  
Vicksburg Campaign  
Featuring  
James Stanbery, Historian**

Bring your spouse and/or friend and one other couple—friends, neighbors, and relatives. We assure everyone a night of good food and drink, a superb speaker and camaraderie with your fellow Civil War enthusiasts.

Thanks very much for your support in the past. We look forward to sharing the evening of May 28<sup>th</sup> with you.

Please find enclosed a packet of ten raffle tickets. These tickets can be sold at one (1) ticket for \$5.00 or three (3) for \$10.00. Sell these to your friends and colleagues as they do not have to be present to win. This is a great bargain! This package is a \$340 value at a four-star mountain resort. Please turn the proceeds from your sales over to Wayne Bowen, Treasurer, the night of the event. Thanks very much.

The West Coast Civil War Conference Committee

8665 North Cedar Avenue #112, Fresno, California 93720 • (209) 431-4832