



# SOUTH BAY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

## South Bay Civil War Roundtable Meeting Minutes June 25, 2024

**Meeting Location:** Holder's Country Inn Restaurant located at 10088 N Wolfe Rd STE 130, Cupertino, CA 95014 across from the former Vallco Fashion Mall and via ZOOM

### **Special Activities & Events:**

None

### **Officer Reports**

#### **President**

#### **Membership:**

- Suggestions for attracting new members:
  - Contact local college history instructors  
Note: No updates
  - Connect with local Cub Scouts or Scouts of America troops and/or collaborate with a local history museum  
Note: Needs more discussion
  - Changing meeting place from Holder's to Another Location  
Note: Preferred location that offers Food Services

#### **Update from Tom Roza:**

Use of Jack's Restaurant for SBCWRT Meetings; 1502 Saratoga Ave in the Westgate Shopping Center

- Requirements for using the Room:
  - Room can accommodate up to 14-16 guests
  - \$300 food/beverage minimum (excluding gratuity and tax); price is for exclusive use of room for 2.5 hours on a Tuesday evening
  - Enclosed Room
  - TV available; bring an HDMI cable to connect

- Jack's provides dedicated server to assist members with food/drink orders. All food/drink orders goes towards \$300 minimum.
- Although Jack's currently does not take recurring reservations, we can lock in SBCWRT for the next two months July and August; once closer to September, Jack's will check availability again for the following months.
- Two issues with using Jack's:
  - \$300 Minimum Fee: Currently averaging 8-10 in-person attendees; to meet \$300 minimum (Food only, does not include tip/taxes), each person would have to purchase \$30-\$37 in food/beverages; no one is going to spend that amount er; would have to make up difference with money from the Club's Bank Account. Some members are not attending because the Holder's location is not convenient and also too noisy. More in-person attendees, the per person costs would be reduced
  - No Extended Reservation Process: Need reliable schedule for Jan-Nov; Need to implement a process to ensure we can conduct our meetings

### **Vice President**

No Report

### **Treasurer**

- SBCWRT Wells Fargo checking account as of 5/31/24 had a balance of \$2,368.99; decrease of \$34.48 from April 30

### **Secretary**

- Civil War Quiz: What Do You Know About Canada and the American Civil War?
- Meeting Attendance: Total: 8 (6 in-person; 2 via ZOOM)

### **This Month in Civil War History: June**

**1861:** At the culmination of the Wheeling Convention, the northwestern counties of Virginia broke away from that state to form West Virginia. West Virginia will be officially designated and accepted as the 35th state of the Union on June 20, 1863

**1862:** The Seven Days' Battles before Richmond, General Lee's army attacks the US Army of the Potomac under General George McClellan in a

succession of battles beginning at Mechanicsville on June 26 and ending at Malvern Hill on July 1

**1863:** Battle of Second Winchester, Virginia. Confederate troops under General Richard Ewell defeat Union troops under General Robert Milroy, clearing the Shenandoah Valley of Federal forces.

**1864:** Battle of Cold Harbor, VA. Relentless, bloody US attacks fail to dislodge Lee's army from strong defensive works northeast of Richmond.

### **Person of the Month: Benjamin Hardin Helm**

#### **Background**

- Born June 2, 1831, Bardstown, Kentucky
- Graduated West Point 1851 near 20th birthday
- Served at cavalry school but resigned his commission after a year, when he was diagnosed with inflammatory rheumatism
- Studied law at University of Louisville and Harvard University, graduating in 1853 and practicing law with his father
- In 1855, was elected to the House of Representatives of Kentucky
- In 1860, was appointed assistant inspector-general of the Kentucky State Guard, which he was active in organizing

#### **Civil War – 1861 to Fall 1863**

- Offered position of paymaster of the Union Army; declined offer, returned to Kentucky to raise 1st Kentucky Cavalry Regiment for Confederate Army
- Commissioned a colonel on October 19, 1861
- Promoted to brigadier general on March 14, 1862, and assigned to raise the 3rd Kentucky Brigade
- Fought at Battle of Shiloh
- In January 1863, given command of First Kentucky Brigade, commonly known as the "Orphan Brigade"

#### **Battle of Chickamauga**

- 1st Kentucky part of Breckinridge's division
- September 20, 1863, Breckinridge ordered to move forward and attack Rosecrans's left; some of Helm's Kentuckians and Alabamians managed to reach within 39 yards of the Federal line, but attack fails
- One third of the Orphan Brigade lost
- Sharpshooter from 15th Kentucky Union Infantry shot Helm in the chest
- Mortally wounded, when assured that the Confederates had carried the day, he muttered: "Victory!, Victory!, Victory!"; dies Sept. 21, 1863

#### **Emilie Pariet Todd**

- March 26, 1856, Helm married Emilie Pariet Todd, daughter of Robert Todd of Lexington; half-sister of Mary Todd Lincoln; 18 years younger than Helm
- Ben was the favorite brother-in-law to Abraham Lincoln
- Following Ben's death, Abraham Lincoln and wife went into private mourning at the White House
- The widowed Emilie Todd Helm granted safe passage to the White House in December 1863
- Emilie was labeled the Rebel in the White House; stay caused furor in the Northern press.
- September 17, 1884, body of Brigadier General Ben Harden Helm exhumed from Georgia to be reburied in native Kentucky soil
- Soldiers from both Orphan Brigade and the First Kentucky Cavalry accompanied it on the journey
- Helm re-interred at Helm Place in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where he once lived
- Both Helm and his father, former Kentucky governor John LaRue Helm, are buried there in the family cemetery

### **Emilie Todd Helm**

- Never remarried and wore mourning clothes for the remainder of her life
- Die on February 20, 1930, at the age of 93
- She was buried in the Todd plot at the Lexington Cemetery.

### **Historian**

No report

### **Other Topics**

No Report

### **June Presentation**

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

Topic: "George Armstrong Custer – Part 1"

### **July Presentation**

Speaker: Chuck Seekamp

Topic: "Civil War Surgical Instruments and How They Worked"

### **August Presentation**

Speaker: Alan Sissenwein

Topic: "George Armstrong Custer – Part 2"